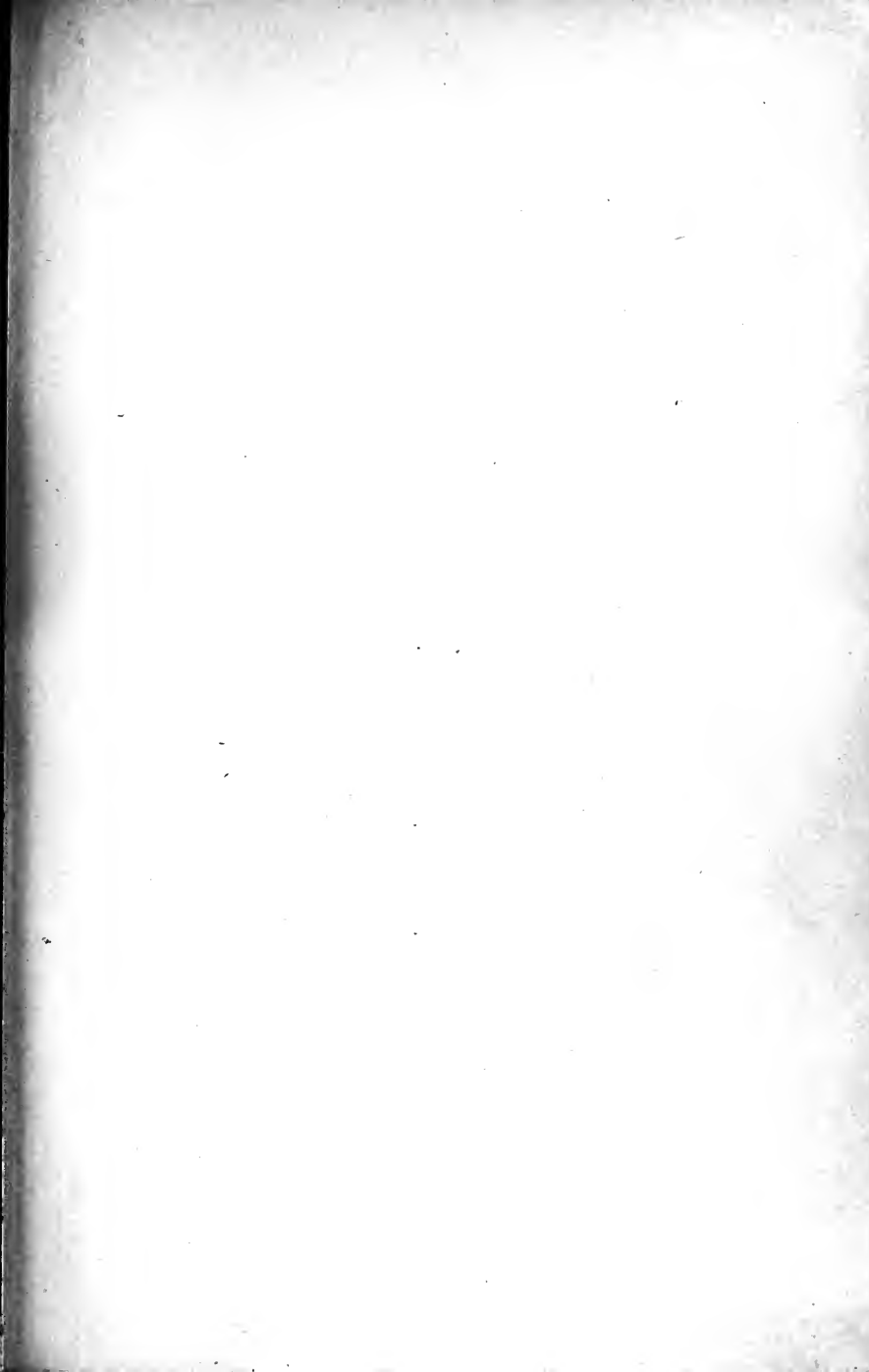


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# THE FLUTE-PLAYER

## AND OTHER POEMS

BY FRANCIS HOWARD WILLIAMS



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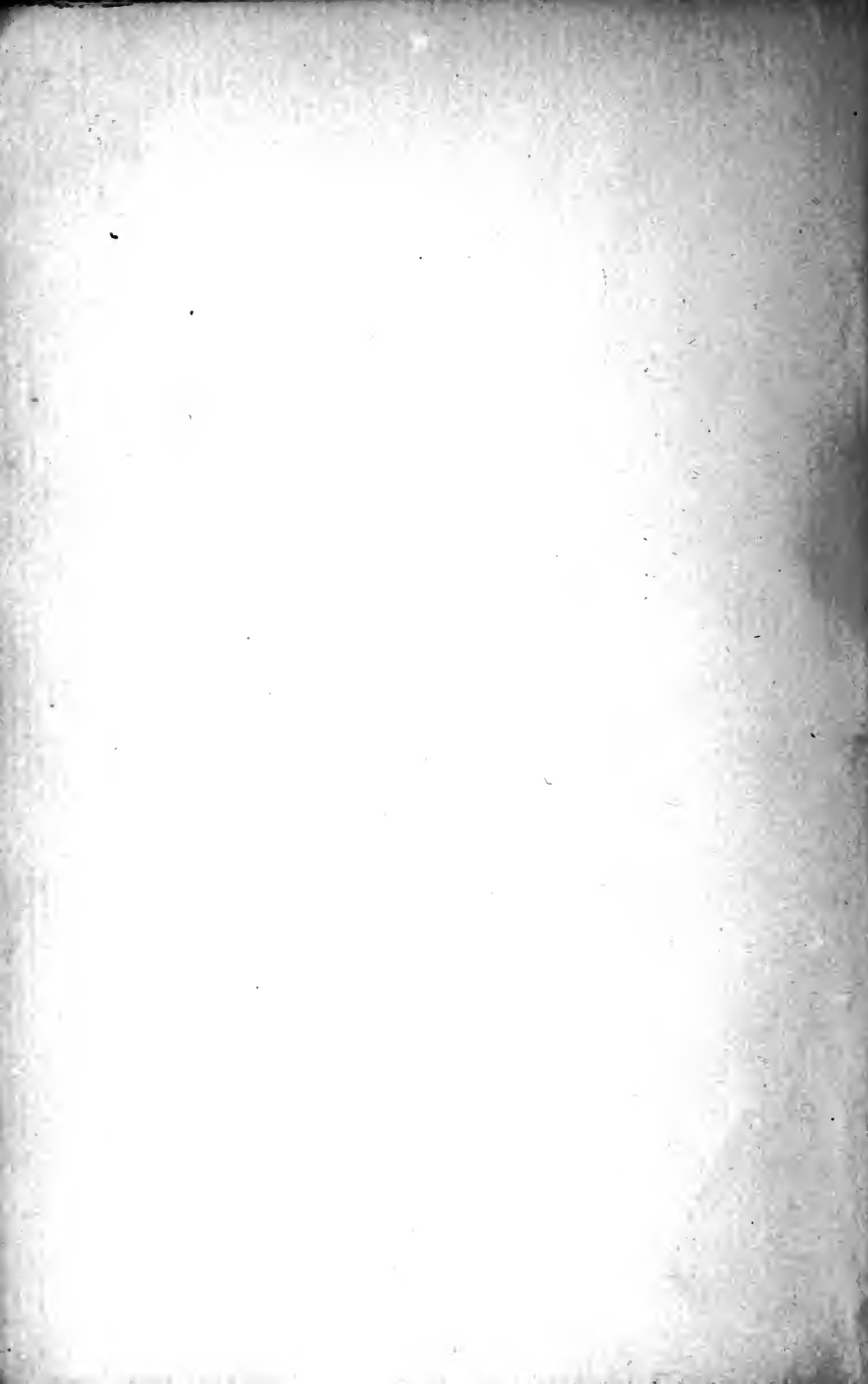
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## THE FLUTE-PLAYER.

THRICE a score of candles, flaring,  
 Fashion shadows on the wall,  
 While the loftier lights are glaring  
 Over all the festival ;

All bravely flare  
 the lights of the  
 festal hall  
 wherein the  
 players begin  
 the symphony.

With a visage melancholy  
 Meditates the dark Bassoon,  
 Glows the 'Cello's face as jolly  
 As a yellow harvest-moon.

And albeit each  
 one thinketh  
 but of his own  
 part, yet the  
 wholeness of the  
 symphony suf-  
 fereth no mar-  
 ring thereby ;

Lean the Oboë and eager,  
 With a sharp, uplifted chin ;  
 Bald and red, and seeming meagre  
 In his brains, the first Violin ;

For, of a truth, it  
 is here as with  
 the music of  
 humanity, to the  
 which tho' all  
 must contribute,  
 many an one  
 furnisheth a

note that is but a discord to that of his fellow.

But the Flute with shoulders bended  
 And his scanty silvered head,—  
 Ah ! what present joys are blended  
 With the sorrows that are fled.

And one player  
 thinketh but of  
 being done with  
 as small pain as  
 may be, and  
 another reckon-  
 eth how he shall  
 expend the wage

of his labor in rioting and wantonness.

Why, tho' haply he remembers  
 Vanished gleams of Paradise,

But the Flute-  
Player, who  
sitteth well  
stricken in  
years, seemeth  
to have learned  
somewhat of the  
secret of life,  
even as a soul  
that hath found  
Truth in the  
sweet shows of  
Nature. So that  
no sooner hath  
the music begun,  
than he seeth,  
as it were by the  
inner eye of the  
spirit, himself a  
lad.

Glow love's unextinguished embers  
Deeply in his faded eyes ?

Strange that songs forever borrow  
From the past their sweetest lay !  
Strange that every silver morrow  
Has a golden yesterday !

Strange ! the flutist, bowed and  
slender,  
Marks no more the bâton's lead,  
As he breathes a message tender  
Thro' his mild and mellow reed.

And the gay  
Allegro  
quickeneth his  
pulses.

For the player in his dreaming  
Sees himself again a boy,  
Finding real all the seeming  
Of life's sudden cup of joy ;

And full soon  
he groweth  
'ware of the  
touch of man-  
hood.

Hears the fretted music ringing  
Down the corridors of art,  
Hears love's voice eternal singing  
Thro' the chambers of his heart ;

For his sweet-o'-  
heart cometh  
tripping adown  
a green country  
lane.

Feels a touch of tenderest meaning  
Steal into his soul again,  
As a maid o'er April greening  
Saunters down a country lane ;

There is nothing to dissemble,  
Naught to fear in love's behest,  
Where the violets lie a-tremble  
In the heaven of her breast.

And lo! she is  
very fair to look  
on, and her  
gentle seeming  
is as a balsam  
to his eyes.

Is it but the morning's blessing  
That the maiden looks so fair?  
Is it but the warm caressing  
Of the sunlight in her hair?

The Player  
dallyeth with  
the vision.

(Suddenly a dulcet blending  
Of the strings and oboë  
Marks the gay allegro's ending  
In a flood of harmony.

Then cometh a  
change in the  
measure and he  
awakeneth all  
regretful  
thereof.

Then in slow and solemn number  
The adagio begins,  
Fraught with harmonies that cumber  
Gloriously the violins.)

But soon the  
tardy Adagio  
wooeth his spirit  
again to dream.  
And the  
symphony goeth  
well, and  
forasmuch as all  
the players obey  
the wand of him  
who leadeth, the  
end thereof is  
Beauty;  
for verily  
Obedience is  
the gate to  
Knowledge, and  
Knowledge is  
Truth, and  
Truth is Beauty.

Haply some melodious motion,  
Born of music's eloquence,  
Lulls to slumber like a potion  
Ravishing the spirit's sense;

For again the old Flute-Player  
Dreams away o'er land and sea,  
Idle as a sunburnt strayer  
In the fields of Arcady.

*The Flute-Player.*

Yet the players  
are sordid,  
being but blind  
followers,  
wedded each to  
his own husks.

There, within his vision standing,  
Smiles the love of all his life,  
Like a maiden bud expanding  
To the flower he calls his wife.

And the stately, cadenced measure  
Of the rich adagio,  
Woven thro' remembered pleasure,  
Woofed of half-forgotten woe,

And betimes  
the aged  
Flute-Player  
seeth his  
sweet-o'-heart ;

Comes with wisdom of the ages  
Pulsing in its ebb and flow,  
Laden with the lore of sages  
From the land of Long-Ago.

Now become  
his good-wife.

And a cottage in the sunlight  
Sheds the glory of the sun,  
Wherein magic, from his one light,  
Many lights of love has won ;

And he heareth  
the babble of  
children in the  
glow of the  
ingle.

For the low voice of a woman,  
Children's laughter, merry cries,  
Come in tones divinely human  
From an earthly Paradise.

And ere he well  
knoweth, the  
time hath pas't  
to the ripe o' the  
year, and  
middle-age hath  
come.

" Well I love them ! " in a broken  
Whisper 'neath the murmurous trees ;  
" Well I love them ! " partly spoken  
Thro' the sympathetic keys.

“ Is it better pain and pleasure  
To remember or forget ?  
Is it—? Ah! they change the measure,  
This is sure the minuet ! ”

And lo! he  
starteth as the  
measure of the  
music changeth  
to the stately  
Minuet.

And the player all sedately  
Scans his notes with eyesight worn,  
While the movement lapses stately  
As a breeze among the corn,

Till the tones a subtler meaning  
Garner from the vanished years,  
O'er life's fields of harvest gleaning  
Aftermath of many tears.

Agait the  
pageant of his  
dreams ariseth  
before him, and  
time, which ever  
hasteth apace,  
hath silvered  
o'er his hair,  
and corded his  
faded hands  
with great veins,  
and dulled the  
lustre of his  
eyes.

Fleet before him evanescent  
Seasons thro' their courses run,  
Light as dewdrops iridescent  
In the laughter of the sun ;

And the robin of the ring-time  
Learns to pipe a lovelier tune ;  
And the bride of early springtime  
Is the sweeter wife of June.

Comes the warm, sun-soaked Septem-  
ber,

Life's wine red upon the lees ;  
Comes the rimy-lipped November,  
Children's children at his knees.

And it pleaseth  
him well to  
fancy that 't is  
the laughter  
of his  
grandchildren

and their right  
merry pother  
that come unto  
him from the  
bars of the  
lively Scherzo.

Onward, ever onward speeding,  
What is this the old man sees?  
'T is the bâton deftly leading  
Thro' the scherzo's harmonies.

. . . . .

Mayhap his  
dream hath put  
on the vestments  
of reality.

Suddenly in tones supernal,  
Earthward borne in lordlier rhyme,  
Comes the boom of waves eternal,  
Breaking on the sands of time.

For lo! the  
lights fade, and  
from his ears the  
sound of the  
instruments  
dieth away.

Whence the rapture in the gazing  
Of the aged flutist's eyes?  
Whence the tenderness amazing  
In the wedded harmonies?

He seeth no  
more the wand  
of the leader.

Why should he, thro' every turning  
Of the mellow symphony,  
Play his single part, then spurning  
All control, seem but to be

The clouds roll  
asunder and  
there cometh a  
Divine beckon-  
ing from the  
firmament.

Fluting fast and ever faster  
Thro' the music's crowded bars,  
Led by a celestial master  
Beating time among the stars?

The Flute-  
Player's ears  
are ravish't with  
vast harmonies  
ineffable.

Ah! he hears a cadence woven,  
As a thread of song might be,  
By a more divine Beethoven  
Thro' a mightier symphony.

In his fading eyes the story  
Of a life is written fair ;  
O'er his brow a summer glory  
Warms the winter in his hair.

And as down remembered valleys  
Love and youth together stroll,  
Thro' the flute's mellifluent alleys  
He is breathing out his soul.

And he breath-  
eth a strange  
melody through  
his flute.  
The tones grow  
celestial, for lo !  
the Flute-Player  
is uttering his  
soul, and it pass-  
eth out divinely.

Struck with sudden admiration,  
Falls the leader's nerveless hand ;  
Conscious of divine elation,  
All the men in wonder stand ;

And all the  
players stand  
dumb, being  
wrought upon  
by a deep awe ;

In their eyes strange fires are burning ;  
Each melodic voice is mute,  
Save the pure impassioned yearning  
Of the liquid-throated flute.

But the flute  
continueth.

It is the Finalé,

Every movement has been rendered  
Sanctified from days of yore,  
All the instruments have tendered  
Reverence to the glorious score.

And, of a truth,  
may we not say  
that 't is even so  
in all of life ?  
For albeit many  
tones be blended  
in harmony and  
discord, yet 't is  
the pleading of  
the single voice  
that reacheth to  
the everlasting  
ears.

All have mingled in the heaven  
Born of wedded tone and tone ;  
The finalé must be given  
By the soulful flute alone.

Many men shall  
mingle in the  
world, but 't is  
the naked soul  
which must  
come *alone* to  
the altar-steps  
of God.

Ay, the symphony, tho' blended  
In accordance loud and long,  
Sinks at last, when all is ended,  
To the pleading of a song.

. . . . .

Still the candles, weirdly flaring,  
Fashion shadows on the wall,  
Still the loftier lights are glaring  
Over all the festival.

The fluting  
dieth into  
silence.

Hark ! Is this a sigh or singing  
Dying on the listening air ?  
'T is the flute's voice, upward winging  
Like a music-laden prayer.

The dead fingers  
lie, loving, across  
the keys.

And a hush in benediction  
O'er the bended man is shed ;  
Death that glorifies affliction  
Wreathes an aureole 'round his  
head.

The symphony  
is finish't, but  
its last chords  
have been sound-  
ed beyond the  
stars.  
'T is only the  
Flute-Player  
who hath heard  
the final  
harmony.

And his fingers still are pressing  
Voiceless keys with loving art,  
Still the silent flute caressing  
On the silence of his heart.

## TO BEAUTY : AN ODE.

### I.

THERE comes a sure uplifting of the soul ;  
Forth leaps a light late shadowed in eclipse ;  
Before my seeking gaze the vapors roll  
Backward, and bursts the new apocalypse !  
In this large moment, Spirit of Beauty, thou  
That dost possess me with thy loveliness,  
I am elate to feel thee, know thee mine,  
To wrap my being in the sense of joy  
Which is thy being, till thou dost endow  
My soul with love heroic and the stress  
Of high endeavor. Life hath no alloy,  
So touched upon by thee, but grows divine  
In potency of action, power of nobleness.

### II.

An hour of youth that dreams of no hereafter,  
A day of toil amid encircling fears,  
The comradeship of human loves and laughter,  
The sanctifying grace of human tears ;  
A weary waiting through the years that cumber,  
A weary sowing that the world may reap,

A silent drooping of the head to slumber,  
A silent closing of the eyes to sleep.  
And this is life, which thy fair ministries  
Have made to me a dream of solemn joys,—  
In candid sunlight, with the somnolent bees,  
In glorious glooms of forest sacristies,  
In green recesses where the fret and noise  
Of the defeated, despicable world  
Come not to break the bliss of solitude.  
Ah! beacon hurled  
From God's hand into trackless nights of  
mind,  
By thy fair light I find  
The hidden flaws of the philosophies,—  
The nerveless food  
Of earth-bred natures barren of the skies.

## III.

What time the Spring had wantoned with the trees  
And wrought a pallor over Arcady,  
Thou camest to me robed as one might be  
Who ministered to Love's high revelries,  
And didst uplift me with thy starry eyes,  
Till I, divine in thy divinity,  
Encompassed heaven in being loved of thee,  
And drew from Paradise  
Delight to a sad world all rapturously.  
To touch thy hair the sun had quit the skies;  
And joy upon thy brow had fallen on sleep,  
Being surfeited with sweets which still did keep  
The portals of thy uncompanioned lips;

And in the woven cadence of thy sighs

I heard Love's song wherethrough light  
laughter slips,—

Life's undertone that cannot choose but weep.  
And I spread wide my arms, but thou wert gone ;  
Naught left but memory's mocking counterpart,—

The wafted fragrance of thy outblown hair,  
Subtle as odors of the Summer's heart ;

And in the lambent and unpeopled air  
A vision fading as a dream at dawn.

IV.

Is it but Fancy that doth sometimes cheat

Our wayward pulses into quietude,—

A stern necessity of joy, a mood

Begotten of much yearning upon thee,

Spirit that bearest wings upon thy feet

And laurel on thy white unageing brows,—

Spirit of streams and woodland minstrelsy

And Art's high heritage that with faith endows

Lives else all incomplete ?

I only know thou dost vouchsafe delight,

Born of the morning and the sweet-breath'd  
night

And silent hills that lift their fronts to woo

The upper air's yet deeper silences,

The while the thoughtful twilight hovers nigh

To stay the fretting of the leaves, as who .

Should murmur : " Peace a little, it is I,"

And ever in profounder whispers, " Peace " ;

The pale light fading from clear winnowed skies  
As fleeting colors from the face of Fear ;  
A bird-song that releases rhapsodies,  
And dies into the lucent solitude  
With such divine decadence, that I hear  
Remembered music in an interlude  
Of visions alien grown to unremembering eyes.

## v.

And I shall never lose thee ; thou dost keep  
Tryst with my soul.  
In patins wrought of daisies on the meads,  
In violets lifting scented lips to God,  
Haply in songs that flood the aisles of sleep,  
Upon the fretting of unceasing needs  
I feel the soothing and the sure control  
Of thy cool fingers. In each greening sod  
Is written thy evangel, and the ways  
Thy feet have trod  
Are redolent of all fair flowers that are,  
While in thy deep commemorative gaze  
Peace lingers like an upward-pointing star.

## THE INNER VISION.

WHERE the sky in sleep and silence dreams  
away the drowsy days,  
And the sunlit spaces shimmer in the films of  
golden haze,  
Great Antonio, he of Spezzia, slowly thro' the  
seasons wrought,  
Striving ever to embody that which his profounder  
thought  
Found elusive as a perfume, or the melody that  
dwells  
(Heard thro' misty miles of distance,) in the pulses  
of the bells ;  
Till at last the storied canvas in triumphant colors  
bore,  
Perfect as a strain of music 'prisoned thus forever-  
more,  
One fair form enfolded in the rare celestial light  
it wore.

Here, where fountains lightly lisp of love to roses  
leaning low,  
Staunch in friendship, dwelt the kinsmen Valentine  
and Angelo ;  
Valentine was brave and brawny, hot the blood  
within his veins ;

His the strength to show compassion to the weakness it disdains ;  
His the supple nerve and sinew, and the step which lightly trod ;  
His the shoulders of a hero and the temples of a god.  
But for Angelo the thoughtful, dreaming ever of a goal,  
Where eternal wreaths of laurel wait to crown the victor soul,  
Life was but the budding promise of a later, fairer flower ;  
Joy the prelude to an anthem ; love the folly of an hour ;  
Pride of strength the badge of weakness ; gentleness the test of power.

So when wide the fame was bruited of Antonio's matchless skill,  
And the finished picture proved the triumph of creative will,  
These two, singly, looked upon its tender curve and living line,  
Gloried in its wealth of color, recognized the touch divine,  
Saw and loved and praised it, each to other, with unstinted breath,  
Saying, "'T is a thing immortal, Tonio was not made for death !"  
And as Valentine enkindled with the beauty and the grace

Of the masterful creation, stirred his life to quicker  
pace,  
And the wild blood, in its flood-tide, painted  
passion on his face.

“Ah!” he sighed, “what deeper rapture, in a  
world grown gray with prayer,  
Than to lose one’s sense of being in the perfume of  
her hair;  
In one mad transcendent moment,—” Quick, with  
hand uplifted high,  
“Hold!” cried Angelo in pallor, “Stay thy word  
of blasphemy!  
By Our Lady’s gracious presence,” (here he crossed  
himself in haste)  
“Thou, tho’ more than friend or brother, shalt not  
find mine ear debased  
To the level of thy lewdness. Hath some Circe  
turned us swine?  
Is the world with dregs so drunken that it cannot  
taste the wine?”  
Then, hot flaming in his anger, “Thou art mad,”  
quoth Valentine;  
“Mad the word and mad the gesture; thou hast  
o’er thy parchments bent  
Till thy blood hath lost true color and thy flame of  
life is spent;  
Thou wouldst preach a stern evangel as our  
holiest heritage,—  
On youth’s fair unruffled forefront write the mes-  
sages of age.

Is it sin to worship Beauty wheresoe'er its shrine  
    may be ?  
Is it shame to wed the pulses of a wide humanity ?  
Thou, mayhap, canst chant a pæan to the joys of  
    dead desire,  
Since no Circe hath debased *thee* till thou darest to  
    admire  
Fair and fatal Aphrodite, born of Foam and bred  
    of Fire !”

“What !” spake Angelo, uprising, “Aphrodite !  
    Heaven be kind !  
Nay, 't is thou art mad of surety ; overfeeding dulls  
    thy mind ;  
'T is Antonio's chiefest glory that his work bespeaks  
    his heart ;  
He ne'er found in pagan harlots lips to lure the  
    kiss of Art.  
That fair form upon his canvas is our Blessed  
    Lady, she  
More divine for being human, earthlier for divinity.  
In the false pride of thy power, thou hast scorned  
    to kiss the rod ;  
Thou hast dared to flaunt thine offal in the very  
    face of God !  
But enough ! Words fall to folly ; test of truth  
    alone is wise ;  
'T is the master who shall tell us whether in those  
    radiant eyes  
Gleams the fire of wanton Venus or the Virgin's  
    Paradise.”

So they strode with eager footsteps to the cool  
pavilion where  
Sat Antonio, grave, and aureoled in a wealth of  
wintered hair ;—  
Put before him all the quarrel which so deep their  
souls had stirred ;  
Vehemently questioned, then awaited his decisive  
word.  
As they ceased the master slowly lifted his prophetic eyes,  
While a smile, half hid, betokened more of sadness  
than surprise :  
“Ye, my sons, have yet to learn the deepest,  
holiest truth in art ;  
Each beholder sees before him only that which  
fills his heart ;  
Eyes anointed by the spirit’s finer touch to nobler  
sight  
Ever catch the dawn of angel faces through Cimmerian night ;  
But to him whose soul is fettered in the meshes of  
desire  
Saints are satyrs tho’ the artist dip his brush in  
living fire.  
Thou, oh Angelo, hast pondered long on visions  
heavenly fair,  
Till the beautiful Madonna smiles upon thee everywhere ;  
But for *thee*, my strong-thewed, lusty Valentine,  
with heart of flame,

Thy luxurious Venus tempts thee till thy lips pronounce her name.  
For the answer to your question, know, my sons,  
ye both are wrong,  
All the beauties on my canvas to humanity belong ;  
Through the weary years I labored, seeking a  
celestial sign,  
Then I painted simply *Woman*, finding nothing  
more divine.”  
Here Antonio paused. In silence, heart to heart,  
and hand to hand,  
Stood the friends with lowered eyelids, humbler  
each to understand ;  
And their chastened ears grew conscious of the  
callings of the sea,  
Lighter than the lambent rumor of the wind across  
the lea,—  
Softer than the sunlight sleeping on the slopes of  
Arcady.

## RIZZIO.

(A FRAGMENT.)

HOLYROOD, March 9, 1566. A banquet table in disorder. At back, the Countess of Argyle, swooning in her chair. Grouped apart, their swords red with the blood of Rizzio, stand the lords Darnley, Morton, Ruthven, Lindsay, and George Douglass. Seated near the centre is Mary Stuart, leaning despairingly upon the table, her face buried in her hands. Rizzio, wounded unto death, is at her feet, clinging to her girdle and striving to reach her face.

### *Rizzio.*

SEE how they stand apart, these lords, whose  
hands  
Have bungled i' the work, else had their points  
Made me a cleaner exit. They mayhap,  
Granting short shrift, would yet bestow a balm  
To soothe the pang and poison of the end.  
My Queen ! thy throat is stung to sudden flowers,  
Tinct with strange colors new begot of love ;  
May I not kiss thee on the mouth and eyes,  
Seeing how sternly this gaunt foe denies  
All quarter to the vanquished ?

Let me hear  
 The old, quick breathing, breaking to desire,  
 To lull the sense and turn the pulses mad.  
 I am a penitent ; ah, gracious Love,  
 Be thou my rosary, and let me tell  
 My sins upon thy perfectness ; as here,  
 Where shadows make a twilight of thy hair,  
 I've dared to feel myself a very god.  
 Or here, renascent in thy eyes, have dreamed  
 That no diviner beacon burns in heaven.  
 O ! little mouth, half rounded to a song,—  
 Swift shuddering with an indrawn lisp of love,  
 My soul hath lost itself to compass thee  
 And rues no whit the barter.

*Mary.*

Prithee peace !  
 For God's love turn thy gaze to heaven.

*Rizzio.*

And so  
 Gaze still, my Queen, on thee.  
 Nay, nay, fear not ;  
 The poisoned chalice destined to my lips  
 Is sweeter that I drain it at thy feet.  
 Ah ! the wounds rankle ! It will not be long,  
 For see how gorgeous the cold stone hath grown  
 In colors of my life . . . .

*Rizzio.*

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*Mary.*

Mother of pain !

Be thou compassionate . . .

*Rizzio.*

There were no need  
To pray compassion did God please to grant  
But one hour longer ; but the ebb hath set  
Strong on the scarlet sea.

Cease weeping, Sweet,  
Libations such as this become divine  
In being offered.

*Mary.*

Ay. But on the same  
Sad altar of my heart I lay a heart's  
Petition. I, who brought a song from France,  
Have heard but thunder from these Scottish hills,  
And for the cates and dainties of delight  
Have been made drunk with blood.

Sweet Heaven, hear  
A prayer for justice, and endow the arm  
Of him whose life is yet a part of mine  
With puissance to right a hideous wrong.

*Rizzio.*

Nay, nay ; leave justice ; I would speak of love.

*Rizzio.*

*Mary.*

And love is justice.

Ah, poor clammy brows !  
And kindly eyes that I have found so fair !  
Would God a queen were not so poor a thing,  
Beggared of easement to a friend . . . .

*Rizzio.*

But stoop

A little nearer till I feel thee through,  
And catch life's light distilment spent like wine  
Upon the lip's curve. So ! thine eyes are fires,  
Quenched and relighted where the drooping lids  
Turn gold to umber. Ah, yet nearer, Sweet ;  
My lips are hot, but soon shall wed wet clay,  
And grow less passionate when my mouth is filled  
With pitiless earth.

Methinks, in faith, to ask  
A hearing loverwise were little now,  
For that the warmth of my embrace falls off  
In touching Death.

*Mary.*

Nay, I am here, look up ;  
Start not so wild !

*Rizzio (brokenly).*

The fragrance of thy breath  
Fades to the faint remembrance of a joy  
Too fine to linger.

Prithee,—speak more close,—  
My ears are strangely dull,—and yet,—and yet  
I hear the wrack of bursting worlds !

More close,—  
God ! I am blind.—More close,—and guide my  
hands

To find again thy face.

Ah, Heart of mine !  
Death is so potent !—It is very dark,—  
Night hath no stars.—

I drain this stirrup-cup  
For love—and for the Queen !

(He clings to Mary's knees, and then rolls over upon the floor. George Douglass snatches Darnley's dagger, and, reaching across Mary's lap, drives it into the dead body of Rizzio.)

*Douglass.*

*This for the King !*

## WOMAN-O'-THE-WATCH.

### I.

A SLOPING stretch of beach that bore away  
Monotonously northward, while beyond,  
Across the glintings of a little bay  
Indented in the coast-line, lay more beach  
That feathered off to mist and lost itself  
In indistinguishable haze of sand and sky.  
Nearer, a reef that ever at low tide  
Rose with bared head and looked askance to land  
Like some poltroon detected in a lie ;  
While over all there hung the neutral tints  
Of a cool sea-sky, cumbered at its edge  
With masses of gray cloud, and flecked across,  
Nearer the zenith, with pale nimbus strips  
That scudded to the South before the wind.  
A path ran backward from the beach's edge,  
Beginning at the place where the scant sedge  
Made a path's presence visible, and thence,  
Leading o'er bits of firmer ground, it wound  
With indirect directness to the mill,—  
The mill, a crazy tower with arms atop,  
That caught a fragment of the untamed wind  
And chained it to the bidding of the town.  
Half a mile back the streaks of south-blown smoke,

Which left the cottage chimneys palely blue,  
Whitened and faded, and in fading formed  
The dim horizon's dusk.

Below, the shore  
Grew bolder, and a little wharf was built,  
Littered with anchors, nets, and half worn ropes,  
And quaint, mysterious masses of hard hemp  
Smelling of tar and salt. A sloop there was  
That rode with lazy motion on the swell  
And curtsied to the strand, while fishing-boats,  
Bearing bright-blazoned titles 'thwart the sterns,  
Bespoke the occupation of the town.

Now the slant shadows of the dipping masts  
Tapered to spar-like spindles, long and lean  
As nodding needles, for the day declined  
And the flat-falling, low-reclining rays  
Told that the time lacked but a transient hour  
Of sunset.

Hence it was that silent steps  
Which lately lingered on the yielding sand  
Grew quicker,—steps of two whose threads of life  
Seemed confluent : one a man with sun-browned  
face,  
Broad shouldered, heavy limbed ; not lacking  
grace,  
Yet of all grace unconscious ; such an one  
As years of sea life might be looked to make :  
The other a slight girl, with form as lithe  
As willow, and her hair as full of lights  
And deepening shadows as a forest stream.  
And these two seemed intent on their one theme,

Unmindful of all else without the world  
Which held their love, for they were to be wed  
—God willing—on the morning of the day  
Which brought another week, and even now  
The man (Edward she called him) whispered low  
Sweet sentences of what the future held,  
—A waiting treasure-trove of untold joys,—  
To fill her soul and his. So long, indeed,  
Upon the unrestful bosom of the deep  
He like a waif had wandered, that the thought  
Of home and hearth and her he loved,—all his,—  
Of tidy curtains drawn to half conceal  
The Paradise within from him who stood  
Without, perhaps the glow and hallowed light  
Of childish faces pressed against the pane,  
Seemed like a long-sought haven of repose  
To over-weary hearts.

Such pictures now  
He drew, while she, with quickening tumult filled,  
Drank in his words and dared not lift her eyes  
Lest, lifted, they betrayed more light of love  
Than heart had faith to utter. Then he laughed  
And said : “ It is not long—to-night I go  
To gather store will ease the coming hours  
Of our sweet honeymoon ; but I shall come  
To thee again on Thursday,—mark the time,—  
On Thursday ere the sun begin to sink.”  
And full of happy hopes of that near day,  
He sang in undertones an old love song,  
Tender and quaint, sea-savoured, and withal  
Melodious :

My love, my love, the tide is flowing  
And slipping under our polished keel ;  
My love, my love, the breeze is blowing,  
And over the waves the red sun glowing  
Tips the spars as they rock and reel.  
But tide may flow,  
And breeze may blow,  
Yet love, my love !  
While Heaven 's above  
I am thine, love, I am thine !

Sweetheart, sweetheart, the wind is droning  
And sighing sadly among the shrouds ;  
Sweetheart, sweetheart, the timbers groaning  
Sound i' the air like a spirit moaning  
Under the gray of the angry clouds.  
Let timbers groan,  
And spirits moan,  
But, sweetheart, sweet !  
Tho' time fly fleet  
Thou art mine, love, thou art mine !

And drawing closer that half drooping head  
Till all its burnt gold saddened into brown  
Under his shoulder's shadow, Edward led  
Their steps close to the little wharf, and then,  
Half-playful, half in earnest, drew from out  
His rough sea-jacket's ample inner folds,  
A curious scarf of brilliant-colored stuffs  
Inwoven with much pain of cunning hand  
Into quaint emblems, meaningless or not,

According to the power of him who sought  
To find a meaning. All the colors, bright  
As painted rainbows on a screen, quick caught  
The eye, and thus had Edward, when he voyaged  
In the last trading trip, seen at a booth  
In some brisk Indian port this gewgaw which  
He bought and carried home to please a whim  
For brilliant hues. Now, drawing forth the scarf,  
He held it to the girl and laughing cried :  
“ This be the sign love’s duty first shall give  
Of love’s own sweet remembrance ; fasten thou  
This, as a flag, upon some bit of staff  
From out the scattered rubbish of the beach,  
And when, heart-hungered, I shall sail near home  
On Thursday, ere the sun begin to sink,  
There, first of all land signals which I see,  
Shall be this emblem fretting in the wind  
And painting all its length against the sky ;  
And so my heart shall gather firmer strength  
To stay its further waiting, and the sign  
Will waft assurance over leagues of air,  
Saying, “ Sweetheart, I wait, thy Ethel waits ;  
Oh lover, husband, come ! ” And then he turned  
Quickly to catch the blood upon her cheek  
Which that last word had brought, for well he  
knew  
How surely it would bring it, and so leaned  
And kissed her. And, ere either knew, they  
reached  
The wharf. There Edward, once more cautioning :  
“ Forget not Thursday, ere the sun go down.”

And whispering that whereof no man may know,  
Save that it drew a flood of tender light  
Across the violet shadows of her eyes,  
Turned from her and was gone, and Ethel stood  
Still as a statue, looking out to sea,  
The scarf of inwrought emblems in her hand,  
And on her face emblems yet deeper wrought,  
Till clear-cut cordage barred across the sun,  
And he had sailed into the West.

## II.

## Time moves

With fateful fingers on the dial, and oft  
Resteps in his old footprints ; so I came  
To that same stretch of beach that bore away  
Monotonously northward. Now there stood  
A thriving, bustling town, compactly built  
And cut with streets rectangular, and neat  
As woodbine tacked against a cottage wall,  
Whereon the eye rests, with a wish the while  
To see it tangled and half lost in grass.  
The path that forty years before had led  
With indirect directness to the mill  
Was blotted out and covered o'er with flag,  
And at the place where once the wharf had been  
Arose a ponderous pier, its space o'erpacked  
With merchandise piled in long tiers and placed  
In orderly confusion. Out beyond,  
A goodly show of shipping, taut and trim,  
Spoke of the commerce of the little port,

And led the eye to wander, as did mine,  
Seeking the farther limits of the view  
Half hid in haze. But soon, as though a spell,  
Wielded by some resistless outer force,  
Had fallen upon me, motionless I gazed  
Upon a single object, wan and weird  
As troubled dreams at dawn. There, in relief,  
Sharp drawn against the background of the sky,  
I saw the figure of a woman, tall,  
But bent as with the weight of added years,  
Stand peering out o'er misty miles of sea,  
As though between the dull red vapor globe  
Which marked the sun's position and herself  
She looked to see some vision of a god  
Float landward with the tide. Her left hand held  
A slender rod, from whose half-splintered top  
Fluttered a rag, flag-fashion, flapping hard  
To rush away upon the gusty wind,  
While with the right she shaded well her brow,  
Nor seemed to know of aught without that space  
Of sea and sky whereon her gaze was set.  
And as I paused, regarding closer yet  
That strange, quaint figure, close to where I stood  
There passed a waterman, with slouching gait,  
Who whistled a quick-changing sailor tune,  
Full of queer grace-notes and untuneful trills,  
That broke the current of my thought, and him  
I beckoned, and, as being one who knew  
The local gossip of the port, I begged  
That I might learn who the wan woman was  
That stood so still facing the wind. And he,

Half doubting if the question asked were asked  
In jest or earnest, raised his brows and smiled  
That it were asked at all.

“I thought,” he said,  
“That all who ever came here knew the tale  
Of *Woman-o'-the-Watch*! Why there she stands  
Where she has stood once every week for more  
Than forty years. I mind me of the times  
When I, a lisping child playing among  
The anchors and the nets, saw that same hand  
Uphold that same split flag-staff, and those eyes  
Look out to sea with that same longing look.  
Master, I think I be full come to years  
Of manhood, and that woman stood as now  
Ere I was born.”

And here he paused, with arm  
Outstretched, pointing his words with gesture.

Then  
Reflectively, as one who conjured up  
Remembrances of childhood, he went on :  
“I oft have heard my father tell the tale  
How that old Ethel (she who stands there now)  
Once on a time was deemed as fair a lass  
As sailor's heart could pine for, and that when  
One loved her and had won her love as well,  
And they were to be wed, he that she loved  
Had left her to be gone but half a week,  
For he was, like the rest, a fisherman,  
And thought to swell his store by one more trial  
Against their coming marriage. But or e'er  
Two days had marked his going there arose

A tempest such as those whose frosted heads  
First saw the sunlight on this coast had ne'er  
Before beheld—a tempest wild as war  
And pitiless as death.

“ Full well all knew  
No fishing boat could live in such a sea,  
And those whose fathers, husbands, brothers, sons,  
Were out, like stricken deer, rushed up and down,  
Some raving, others praying, and all wild ;  
The women wrung their hands and wept, save one  
(This one before us), who stood cold and white,  
And never spake a word. The long night through  
She seemed like some stone sculpture of despair  
Or terror turned to ice. And when the day  
Broke she was left like some dismantled barque,  
Her eye despoiled of lustre, and across  
Her sweet brow written nothingness. Her wits  
Had gone out in the darkness of that night,  
And naught was left but love.

“ Thus sore bereft,  
She, as it were, became a little child,  
Pleased with a plaything, frightened by a frown ;  
And even as a little child will find  
In the same toy which yesterday beguiled,  
Another toy quite fresh and new to-day,  
To tire of now and want again to-morrow ;  
So Ethel, with all ideas lost save one,  
Because her lover, ere he went away,  
Had bade her look on Thursday for his sail,  
Has kept her curious calendar encased  
Within her heart of heart, forgetful as

Each Thursday's sun goes down that Thursday's sun  
Has risen. Thus each week for forty years,  
Like a wan worshipper at a sacred shrine,  
She comes on Thursday ere the sun goes down,  
Unfurling her poor pennon to the breeze  
Upon the pier. She never fails, and so  
The sailors call her *Woman-o'-the-Watch*.  
That, master, is her story."

As the man  
Finished, we came quite close to where she stood  
(For we had walked the while he told the tale),  
And I regarded well those far-off eyes,  
Seeking their solemn secret. O'er her face  
There glowed a strange flush, centering in the  
cheeks,  
Which told of lying hope,—hope long deferred  
And feeding on itself. Her hair, outblown,  
Was nearly white, and all her figure seemed  
But an embodied dream. Then, as the sea  
Broke far adown the shore,—a harmony  
Of fast incoming tides,—I heard her sing,  
In tones so weakened with o'er-freighted days  
The melody seemed drowned in half-spent tears :

"My love, my love, the tide is flowing  
And slipping under our polished keel ;  
My love, my love, the breeze is blowing,  
And over the waves the red sun glowing  
Tips the spars as they rock and reel.  
But tide may flow,  
And breeze may blow,

Yet love, my love !  
While Heaven 's above  
I am thine, love, I am thine ! ”

And I, who watched her closely, saw the light—  
The strange perennial light of those sad eyes—  
Flame dully, as a dying ember flames,  
And half athwart her visage stole a smile  
More pitiful than weeping, and anon  
The eager tension of the muscles drew  
The anxious look into her face again,  
And she was once more peering out to sea  
Silent as stone. But still the restless deep  
In minor chords its requiem rolled abroad,  
And once again she sang :

“ Sweet-heart, sweet-heart,—”

There the voice broke and faltered for a space,  
As a dim memory of the shipwrecked mind  
Stung the hurt heart to anguish, but ere long  
She seemed upborne by some supernal force  
That stirred the slumbering fires of her soul  
And gave her youth and beauty. Once again  
Erect she stood, her eye far-flashing with  
The light of old, her form, remoulded, drawn  
In gracefuller curves against the leaden sky.  
The wind, which came in wet gusts from the sea,  
Tore at her skirts and wrappings, and again,  
Tugging with baffled malice at the flag,—  
The poor, frayed rag whose emblems, once in-  
wrought,

Had wept themselves to whiteness in the storms  
Of forty years,—howled yet intent to drown  
All voices save its own. Yet still her tones  
Upswelled, defiant with their new-found strength ;  
Her blood coursed quickly and the breath of youth  
Came to her lips, and so the melody  
Bore forth the words of that old, tender song,  
Like the triumphant cry of him who fights  
And conquers all :

“ Sweet-heart, sweet-heart, the wind is droning  
And sighing sadly among the shrouds :  
Sweet-heart, sweet-heart, the timbers groaning  
Sound i' the air like a spirit moaning  
Under the gray of the angry clouds.  
Let timbers groan,  
And spirits moan,  
But, sweet-heart, sweet !  
Tho' time fly fleet  
Thou art mine, love, thou art mine ! ”

The strain rose glorified as though it held  
A love outlasting death, and backward hurled  
Defiance to the moth and rust of time !  
Rose as that wondrous cry, triumphant, yet  
So tender, which of old broke on the ears  
Of Thracian women as they looked upon  
The trunkless head of Orpheus, rushing on  
Adown the tide of Hebrus,—that wild cry :  
“ Eurydice, Eurydice, my own ! ”  
Then, as she finished, all her new-found fire  
Faded and sank as sank the setting sun ;

And I turned sadly. And the woman stood  
There in the deep'ning twilight.

Now the wind  
Rose to a gale, and ere, with hasten'd steps,  
I reached the nearer edges of the town,  
Swirled the dry sand in circles, and anon  
Broke 'round the angles into wails of woe ;  
Yet once—but for a moment—bore along,  
As it had been the fragment of a song,  
Sung in the rhythm of another sphere,  
A dying cadence, sad as falling leaves :

“Sweet-heart, sweet-heart,—”

And then the mad wind veered,  
And I heard nothing save its own wild chords  
And the low sobs of the eternal sea.

## MAGDALENE.

### I.

THERE is a headland that o'erlooks the West  
And on its forehead at each set of sun  
Takes the warm farewell kisses of the day.  
A windmill, too, with empty arms that plead  
In desolation, widowed of the wind ;  
And long unused stones, grown granulous,  
As though the petulance of age and dearth  
Cankered their disposition.

Half adown  
The sloping hillside, walled from careless feet  
And all the mild mutations of the field,  
Stands in its sanctity a little plot  
Set off forever to the silent dead,—  
The beautiful, wise dead,—and here in peace  
Sleep generations dreaming of the sun,—  
The footsore travellers of the island town  
Who rest and wait the morrow.

Faring once  
Across the headland, down the hillside, I  
Came to this warm God's acre, and drew near,  
Reading, as one who cons remembered lore,  
The brief memorials cut in cumbering stone,

The names of men revered and women loved,  
Of children broken even as unoped buds  
From stems that never healed them of the hurt,  
Of kindred honored and friends gone before.  
The headstones stood like sculptured sentinels  
Anticipant in posture. One there was,  
Partly in shadow of the loving grass,  
Which drew my gaze by its elusive spell  
And struck me into wonder. Over half  
The legend-bearing stone the moss had grown,  
Weaving a green, impenetrable veil,  
And lichen, closer clinging than doth cling  
Love's lips to lips that falter a farewell;  
Covered it deeper into mystery.  
So stood the tablet, bearing to the light  
One half a history, while the shrouding bloom  
Of reticent nature blotted out the rest.  
I read a name, *Honorio*. To the right  
A fair sunlit inscription. To the left:  
Naught but the masking greenery.

## II.

So I came  
And knelt before the cryptic stone, and bent  
The sunburnt grasses back, and read the clear  
Uncovered story of the sleeper :  
"Here  
Lies one whose hands were wrought to sacrifice ;  
She visited the poor ; she served the sick ;  
She did the Christ's work in a weary world."

Then I, with heart that knew the weight of tears  
And ever a haunting sense of life's strange coil,  
With mine own soul communed : " In very truth  
This woman was as one elect of God."  
And yet the moss-grown riddle was unread ;  
What message 'neath that mantle should I find ?  
Wherefore this mutilated epitaph,  
This tribute marred of half its meaning, blurred  
To imperfection by the touch of Time ?

I stooped and painfully sought how to force  
The moss and lichen from their stony soil ;  
I clave the uprooted tendrils, piece by piece,  
And tore the green delights whose cool caress  
Lay like a storied palimpsest. Yet still  
Those firm fond fingers of a dryad maid  
Clung to the stone as love to life, and I  
Won with hard toil a letter, then a word,  
Wringing from weeping Nature what she held  
In sacred trust of secrecy, and so  
Filching a sentence from her shielding hand  
In characters tear-stained to darker hue,—  
The record of a maiméd life :

" She loved  
Nor well nor wisely, and fell off apace,  
And lived, alas ! unfaithful to her vows."

### III.

Over the headland grieved the cadenced wind,  
And fell among the grasses, and died off ;  
A little ghost of perfume from a rose

That nestled to the shelter of the mounds,  
Touched me like spiritual fingers.

May not, then,  
The sense of human justice be appeased,  
That thus it graves a frailty into stone?  
Honor, that hast ministered to need  
And heard the low voice of the Nazarene,  
Why has thy brother blazoned here thy sin?  
For this thy tomb thy noble deeds alone  
Were fitting record. Nature's mercy knows  
More than man's rigor dreams of, and has woven  
Her careful web o'er his impeachment; ay,  
Even in thy fall, Honor, thou hast found  
The kiss of God upon thy ruined brow.

I climbed the hillside where the windmill stands  
With pleading arms; no sails, lateen and lank,  
Shall ever again entice the breeze to sing  
Light-hearted at its work; and yet I thought  
There came a whispered promise on the air  
That loitered mid the field flowers, voluble:  
"Much is forgiven, for she loved much."

And all the warm gold of the setting sun  
Hallowed the headland that o'erlooks the West.

NANTUCKET.

## THE WOOD ROBIN.

DEEP in the hooded aisles,  
Green-gloomed recesses,  
Where solitude beguiles  
My mobled grief to smiles,  
And half expresses  
Dreams of song-music mystically sung ;  
As one who bows to share  
The benison of prayer,  
My soul confesses  
Madness in melody like fragrance flung  
Fair over bloomy miles.

What art thou that canst bring  
Such sweet nepenthe,  
That I, who hear thee sing,  
Elated, seem to wing  
To Him who sent thee,  
Far thro' the luminate and spacious sky ?  
How from thy dulcet throat  
Distillest thou the note  
Delight hath lent thee  
To ravish hearts till lips forget to sigh,  
Lost in thy carolling ?

From collid depths of trees,  
In rhythmic motion,  
Thy quavering gospel frees  
Lays liquid as the seas  
Sing to the ocean—  
Or leaves list in the whisper of the rain.  
Messiah of the sky !  
Incarnate Rhapsody !  
In thy devotion,  
Like Love's breath breathed across the lips of Pain,  
Song shudders down the breeze.

Brother of Philomel,  
Impassioned singer,  
In thy full-throated swell  
Such rest and rapture dwell  
That joy, Joy-bringer,  
Throbs thro' the threnody of weary years.  
A-tremble down the green  
Of married dusk and sheen  
Thy wood-notes linger  
In cadences whose laughter breaks to tears,  
Forth faltering "Farewell."

## SERVUS SERVORUM DEI.

(FROM A PICTURE.)

A SCENT of olive faltered in the air,  
And Fra Anselmo, with his well-fed lip  
Drawn up in contemplation, felt his brow  
And pondered o'er his cards ; his brother there  
Had thrown an ace, and smiling even now  
As though he held the game, placed hand on hip  
And half winked at Anselmo.

These two sat  
Within the monastery garden, snug  
And comfortable, with a flask of wine  
And fruit upon a salver at their hand,—  
Fra Bartolómeo, lean and featured fine,  
And Fra Anselmo, sensuously fat,  
While on the breeze, as from a distant land,  
A dreamful voice of bells hung rapturously  
And broke to splintered music 'mid the boughs  
That bended South and seemed intent to hug  
The sun-soaked coping of the garden wall.  
“Brother, I played an ace.” The holy vows  
Of Bartolómeo had not hurt his love  
Of winning hands at cards. “Oh, is that all?”

Anselmo laughed, "I'll cover it with this,  
The diamond is the trump, I think, you said."

And ere he ceased to speak, a haggard man  
Peered through the fretted gate,—a man above  
Whose brow were lines of toil, and whose bent back,  
Grown callous by long journeyings, seemed wed  
To the hard angles of his cumbrous pack.  
A child was with him whose bewildered eyes  
Held that within them which in time should fan  
A man's heart into flame, but now there dwelt  
Naught there but sadness and the light to seize  
The rainbows hid in tears. These two had felt  
Hard want together, and their postures plead  
More eloquently than all spoken words.  
Then from his pack the wayworn peddler drew  
Some crucifixes carved in olive wood  
And strung with chains of cunning handiwork,  
And holding out his wares, in reverence stood  
And begged the monks to purchase: "May it  
please,  
I have sold naught to-day." Anselmo threw  
An angry glance, and with impatient jerk  
Of his shaved head, ordered the man away,  
The while the child looked wonderingly and wept  
To see the sacred emblems sadly placed  
Again within the pack: "Naught, naught to-day,"  
She murmured, and they passed adown the road.—

"I threw an ace," Fra Bartolómeo said.—  
The echoes of receding footsteps chased

Each other into distance,—steps that strode  
And steps that pattered,—man and child who kept  
Together on their weary way. And so  
The image of the dying Christ passed, too,  
And in the dusty highway disappeared.  
Then mid the whispering leaves a note of woe  
Seemed mingled with the chimes, and ever through  
The music of the vespers wove a sigh.  
“I threw an ace,” Fra Bartolómeo said ;  
And Fra Anselmo answered : “Yes, and I  
Have thrown a diamond, ’t is the trump that wins  
(Whether the cards be spotted black or red),  
Most of the games played in this world of sins.”

And once again a sob was in the bells :  
Fra Bartolómeo sipped his wine and smiled.  
The sun was setting, and the East grew wan  
As one whose pallor hasting death foretells.  
Anselmo dealt his cards.—The sad-eyed child,—  
The bended man,—the broken Christ—were gone.

## THE SEA.

**I**LLIMITABLE Brahman of the Earth !  
Great Self to which the World-Soul gravitates !  
Thou dost contain all essences, enfold  
All secrets in the hollows of thy heart  
Where bide unending love,—preventing law.  
Teach me but half the knowledge hid in thee,  
But half the peace within thy silent cells,  
And I shall know my godhead, as I know  
Here for a little while my sad humanity.

AN ANSWER.

I QUESTIONED : *Why is evil on the Earth ?*  
A sage for answer struck a chord, and lo !  
I found the harmony of little worth  
To teach my soul the truth it longed to know.

He struck again ; a saddened music, rife  
With wisdom, in my ear an answer poured :  
*Sin is the jarring semitone of life,—*  
*The needed minor in a perfect chord.*

ARS LOQUITUR.

I AM the means ; they do degrade me most  
Who make of me the end of life's desire ;  
I do interpret Beauty, but am not  
That Beauty's self ; I ever bend to hear  
Divine Imagination's high commands,  
Obeying that which is immutable.  
They serve me best whose gaze transcends my law,  
And know me least who wear me as a gyve.  
I am the Living God of little men,—  
The tool of great men I.

## WINTER RAIN.

LIKE driven smoke the rain among the trees  
Slants silently to find the sodden grass,  
There is a living shudder in the breeze  
And every shrub an icy vesture has ;  
No shape of loveliness but, ere it pass,  
Doth turn and thrill me with immortal eyes ;  
No voice but stills its song to sigh " Alas ! "  
No cloud but blots the blue of naked skies.  
While I stand mute and mourn a vanished Paradise

Summer, that once within thy scented lap  
Pillowed my head, as on a daisied hill  
We sat together, thou and I, mayhap  
Too much enamoured of each other's will,  
Why hast thou left me, desolate and chill,  
To fashion ghosts upon the viewless air ?  
Why should more favored suitors have their fill  
Of joy and sunlight, while my bitter fare  
Brings hunger to my soul and to my heart despair ?

Is it that flesh grows gross in tasting joy,—  
That Pain's sword gives the accolade divine ?  
Is it that sorrow mingles its alloy  
To touch men's gilded lives to issues fine ?  
Ah ! that the seeker for life's glorious wine

Must rend each pulsing heart from which it flows ;  
Ah ! that the working out of love's design  
Should crush the perfume from each velvet rose,  
And rudely wake the soul from Summer's soft  
repose.

Yet hark ! the liquid whisper of the rain  
Is riven by a song that high and higher  
Soars and fades faintly till the rare refrain  
Seems of its own soft rapture to expire.  
Is it pale Winter singing to the lyre  
Of barren branches and ungarnered sheaves ?  
Is it the hymning of a vernal choir,—  
The immortal spirits of the unborn leaves ?  
I know not, yet my inner sense the song receives.

PHÆDRA (*Loquitur*).

UNLOOSE the triple serpents at my throat  
And let me bare my bosom to the night ;  
Then leave me, ye whose blood is held in leash  
To do a matron's bidding, ye unstained  
Træzinian women, with white horror writ  
Stark in your bended brows !

I may not tell  
What question seeks an answer in my soul,  
Seeing I am half human at the best,  
And stung by loves that suck the breasts of Fear.  
Look, where the sleeve falls open, how my arm  
Borrows new pallor from the impassioned moon,—  
Herself a borrower, bankrupt e'en as I  
When light and love must be repaid in kind.  
May I not follow, with unsandaled feet,  
The scented wood-ways leading to bowered joy,  
And sate mine eyes, though all my body die  
Of baulked desire, whereat the sad gods frown ?  
I seek Hippolytus, and though he slay,  
Still will I seek him, still from 'venging heaven  
Braving the bolts ye prate of.

Back, I pray ;  
Give me a little air upon my eyes,  
Upon my throbbing brows the night's caress ;  
Go ye, and win your lords to softer ways :  
For me Delight is married to Despair,  
And I woo both within the arms of Death.

## AN IONIAN FRIEZE.

HORSES rampant and curbed, compactly close,  
With polished hooves that quiver from the  
earth,  
And mane-enfringéd necks, whose rondure shows  
In silhouette against the pale sky's girth.  
Beneath chaste marble, jewelled of chrysolite,  
A gracile girl, with fillet-girdled hair,  
Stands half revealed through folds of shimmering  
white,  
Her carmine lips wed to a silver flute,  
As though their budding beauty to transmute  
To music dying off along the air.  
In sage processional pass bearded priests,  
And acolytes with pink and boyish limbs,  
Chanting to all the gods strange bardic hymns,  
Less tuned to sacrifice than fit for feasts.  
And over all the antique light, the old  
Divine perfection, the lost art which drapes  
In fairest majesty heroic shapes  
Enwrought upon a field of beaten gold.

## A DREAMER.

HE loved the Morning with her lips a-cold,  
He drank large wisdom at Noon's nipples  
    breast,  
And, like a later Jason, sought his gold  
    Among the fleeces of the winnowed West.  
Through days divinely blent of love and light,  
    By reedy runnels he was wont to sit,  
Till broke upon his sense-enraptured sight  
    The Everlasting Poet's epic, writ  
In stars upon the placid forehead of the Night.

He loved to feel the pulses of the Spring,  
    Thrilling with life that struggled to the sun,—  
To list the message that the blossoms bring  
    And count the roses as a guerdon won.  
Within the Summer's deep blood-tinctured heart,  
    To squander days beneath the murmurous trees,  
Till through his dreams the cunning hand of Art  
    Inwrought the splendor of such fantasies,  
That Earth, which spake of God, became His  
    counterpart.

Fain were his feet to follow vagrant ways  
    When resinous odors filled the eager air,  
He loved to wander through the amber haze,  
    Across the meadows, to the upland where

Sat Autumn pensively amid her sheaves,  
Marking the alchemy which all too soon  
Transmutes to gold the treasure of her leaves,  
In the long season's mellow afternoon,  
And touches naked boughs wherethrough the sad  
wind grieves.

He was a dreamer, yet he loved his friends ;  
He gained no gold, nor ever garnered care ;  
He strove not to attain ambition's ends,  
Content that other men should do and dare.  
Perhaps he was not noble, yet no fears  
Made up the aftermath of his emprise ;  
For swift success he never bartered tears  
Wrung from the fountains of another's eyes,  
Nor marred the melody Love sings among the  
Spheres.

## COMPENSATION.

A BOAT went out with the ebbing tide,  
A-throb with the pulse of the heart of the sea,  
And curtsied low to the rushy shore,  
And dimpled the waves where the stream grew  
    wide,  
Then rounded the light on the lower lea ;  
And the boat had never a sail nor oar,  
Nor rudder to temper her destiny,  
And *Hope* was the name that her gunnel bore,—  
But she came not back to me.

A ship sailed into the silent West,  
The dearest pride of my heart was she,  
And fair on the sunset's face of gold  
Her tapering spars stood clear confest ;  
And ah ! 't was as sad as sad could be,  
For the days went by and I grew old,  
And night spread over the slumbering sea,  
But my ship was forgot as a tale that is told,  
Nor ever sailed back to me.

I gave a song to the listening air,  
It trembled aloft with a new delight,  
And bore, in the voice of a strange, sweet bird,  
A measure of joy that was half despair ;

And the song was a part of my soul, my might,  
My innermost thought and tenderest word,  
But it sank to a moan and was silenced quite,  
Like memoried melodies long since heard,—  
Lost stars in a starless night.

A woman fair with the grace that clings  
To moonlit eyes and sun-kissed head,  
Leaned low and lightly spake to me,  
Till my man's heart leaped with a sense of wings :  
"Thy hope to an unknown land is sped,  
Thy pride is wrecked in a soundless sea,  
And the fragrant flower of song is dead,—  
Lost to the world and lost to thee,—  
But love is left," she said.

## AVE AMERICA !

AN ODE.

I.

DEAR Land, my Mother ! To thy feet I bring  
The amplest measure of a faltering song ;  
Hope's starlike harbinger ! Wherever wrong  
Hath wrought the work of her imagining,  
Wherever men have felt the gall of chains  
And through the dark have whispered Liberty,  
Or women, widowed of divinest dowers,  
Have smiled between their sobs to dream of thee,  
There hast thou given the solace of thy plains,  
The shelter of thy battlemented towers.  
Thy hills are mine, O Land made doubly dear  
By hallowed homes and yet more hallowed  
graves ;  
Thy coasts whose marge perennially doth hear  
The husky murmurs of innumerable waves :  
Thy forests, too, with shades more soft than sleep,  
And sanctities of solitude wherethrough  
Strange beauty, which from alien eyes doth keep  
Her fair perfection, steals in ever new  
And ever growing wonder. Mine thy bowers,  
And all the mellow comfort of thy fields

Nourished with sunlight and the breath of flowers  
And aftermath perfumes whose parting yields  
An incense fine as prayer. Could I but pass  
Long days in silence on thy sloping meads,  
Amid the populous rumors of the grass,  
Unrest had grown to graciousness, whereof contentment breeds.

## II.

And yet, dear Land, a Nation's vows  
Are graven on thy laurelled brows ;  
For thou wast perfected of fire,  
Fair fruitage of the World's desire,  
Thy mother Justice, War thy sire.  
War when a tyrant's mailed hand  
Sent freedom thrilling through the land ;  
War when again oppression sought  
To dwarf the rights which blood had bought ;  
And War, War, War when Treason's mouth  
Spat poison through the amber South,  
And thy own children struck the blow  
Which, aimed aright, had laid thee low.

Hark to the bells !  
The large alarm that onward speeds,  
Forerunner of undying deeds,  
Outrung from spire to spire,  
To touch the mild  
Peace-pipings with heroic ire !  
How the call swells !  
Strenuous, wild,

Impatient ! And the guns, the guns !  
From Sumter booms  
The signal to thy thousand looms,—  
The summons to thy million sons,  
Dear Country, to put off the ways  
And works of honeyed quietude ;  
To meet the rude  
Awakening with unquickened breath ;  
And with unflinching gaze  
To look into the sodden eyes of death.  
See the battalions splendidly sweeping  
Down from the North !  
With unwavering lines, coming forth  
To bring sunlight of day  
To the marshes where Treason is stealthily creeping,  
Black in a habit of gray.

## III.

But ah ! the sons who at their mother's feet  
Kissed Death's pale lips and knew their joy complete !  
Ah ! thou supreme civilian, tender, wise,  
With fair peace-offerings in thy rugged hands,  
And such divine forgiveness in thy eyes  
As knows no counterpart in all the storied lands !  
The world's vast harmony by thy devotion  
Is made complete ; and through its concords ring  
The notes of thy fair life, in ordered motion,  
Like melody from some earth-nurtured spring,  
Or streams that in the throbbing heart of ocean

Flow on forever and forever sing.

From thee humanity in every clime  
A deeper love of human freedom gains,  
While rings the echo of the falling chains

Struck off by thee and made by thee sublime.  
And as o'er some imperishable bower

The gentle hand of brotherhood might crave  
Love's benediction tenderly to shower,

So were I fain, strong leader of the brave,  
To fling the fragrance of this fading flower,  
Across the fadeless verdure of thy grave.

#### IV.

Rare is the recompense of mighty deeds,  
And high the heritage of lofty souls ;  
And tho' the memory of the past recedes  
Into the mist of unremembering years,—

Tho' Time's wheel rolls

Swift on its axle, scorning human tears  
And men's sad laughter,—yet the spirit lives  
Which makes immortal all great labor done,

All noble thought translated into act,  
And ever gives,

Finer than fable, the undying fact  
Which lies behind each radiant victory won.

And thou, my Mother, with eternal youth

Set like a pearl above thy unruffled brows,  
Art grown more fair that thou awhile didst feel  
The bite of steel,

And in the darkest of thy days wore truth,  
The chiefest jewel in thy diadem.

No further need thy fervor to arouse,  
For thou art victress and the unpriced gem  
Of liberty is thine,  
And all the graces that in perfect-statured womanhood combine.

I see thee now, resplendent, prodigal,  
With royal opulence of field and mine  
Poured in thy broad lap ; with thy granaries all  
Bursting to hold the gifts of generous earth ;  
I mark thy mellow fruitage, thy red wine,  
Sun-tinctured in a million purple hearts ;  
The song of comfort that doth mock at dearth ;  
I hear the hum which from unnumbered marts  
Bruits of thy commerce circling land and sea,—  
A nation's life-blood pulsing endlessly ;  
I hear the clack of laboring looms, and long  
Listen elated to the shuttle's song ;  
Before the crescent sickles of the free  
A continent's fair harvest bows, and shrill,  
Unceasing invocations speed the flight  
Of tireless messengers, to carry art  
To regions that but late have seen the light,  
Through nerves which thrill  
To bear the deep pulsations of a heart  
Which falters not, companioned with a never-faltering will.

Behold ! great Land, thy majesty, and raise  
In deep-voiced ecstasy a song of praise.

## V.

What of the future, O Land of the World's  
aspiration ?

Land of large symmetries wrought on the prairies'  
broad faces,

Land ever lulled by the somnolent kiss of the ocean,  
Ever enthralled with the azure-eyed lakes, con-  
summation

And pride of a continent, deep in whose bosom  
no traces

Of tyranny ever have marred a glad nation's  
devotion,—

What may anointed eyes see

Of the future for thee ?

Deep are the signs and portents, wide in the skies  
are they glowing ;

Onward and upward eternally, fleet as thy rivers  
are flowing,

Speeds thy divinely appointed destiny, ever and  
ever

Seer and Prophet and Bard, glad in their calling,  
bestowing

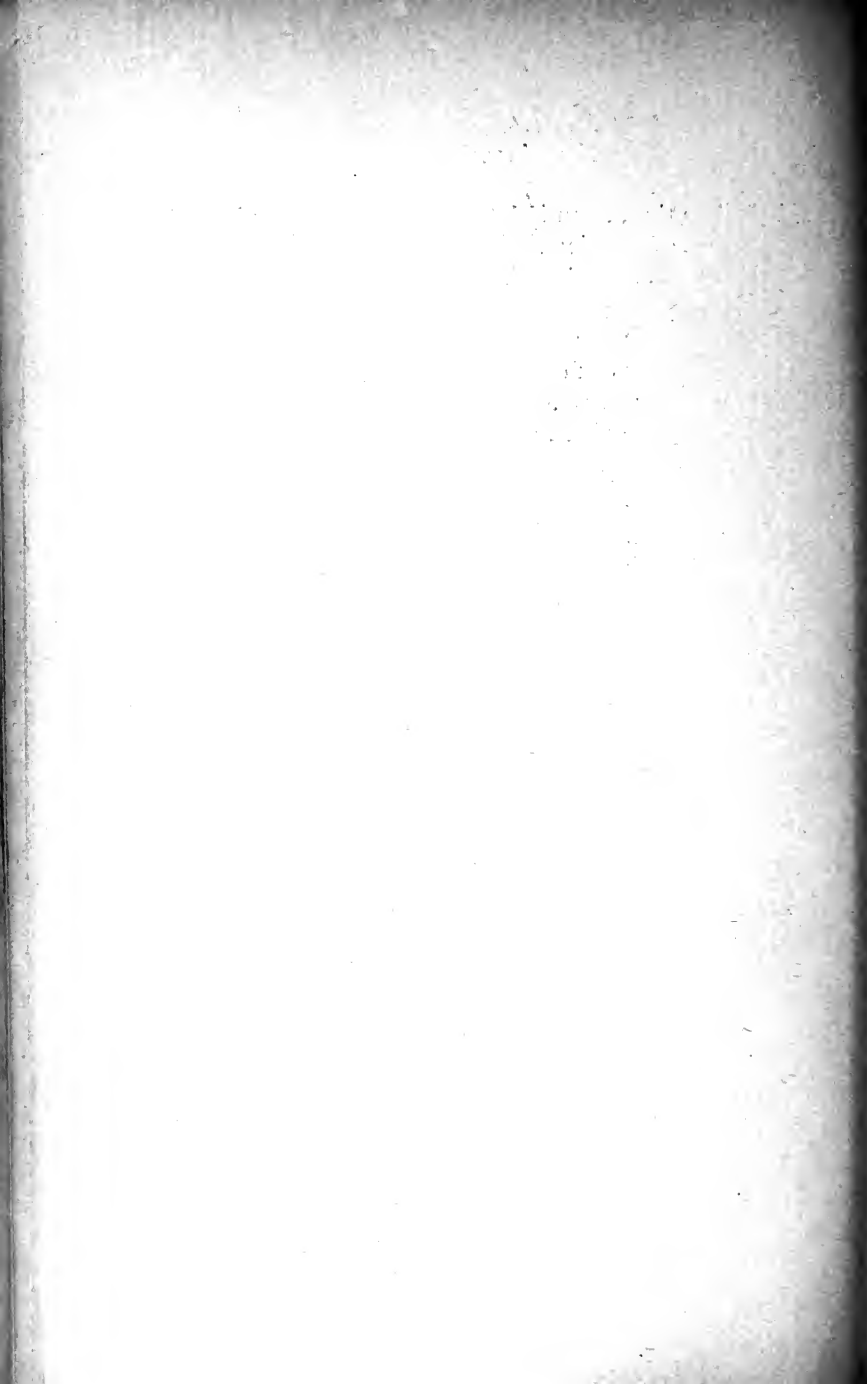
Prophecy, promise, and song, pledge that no  
power shall sever

Thee from thy glory, dear Land ; us from thy love,  
gentle Mother ;

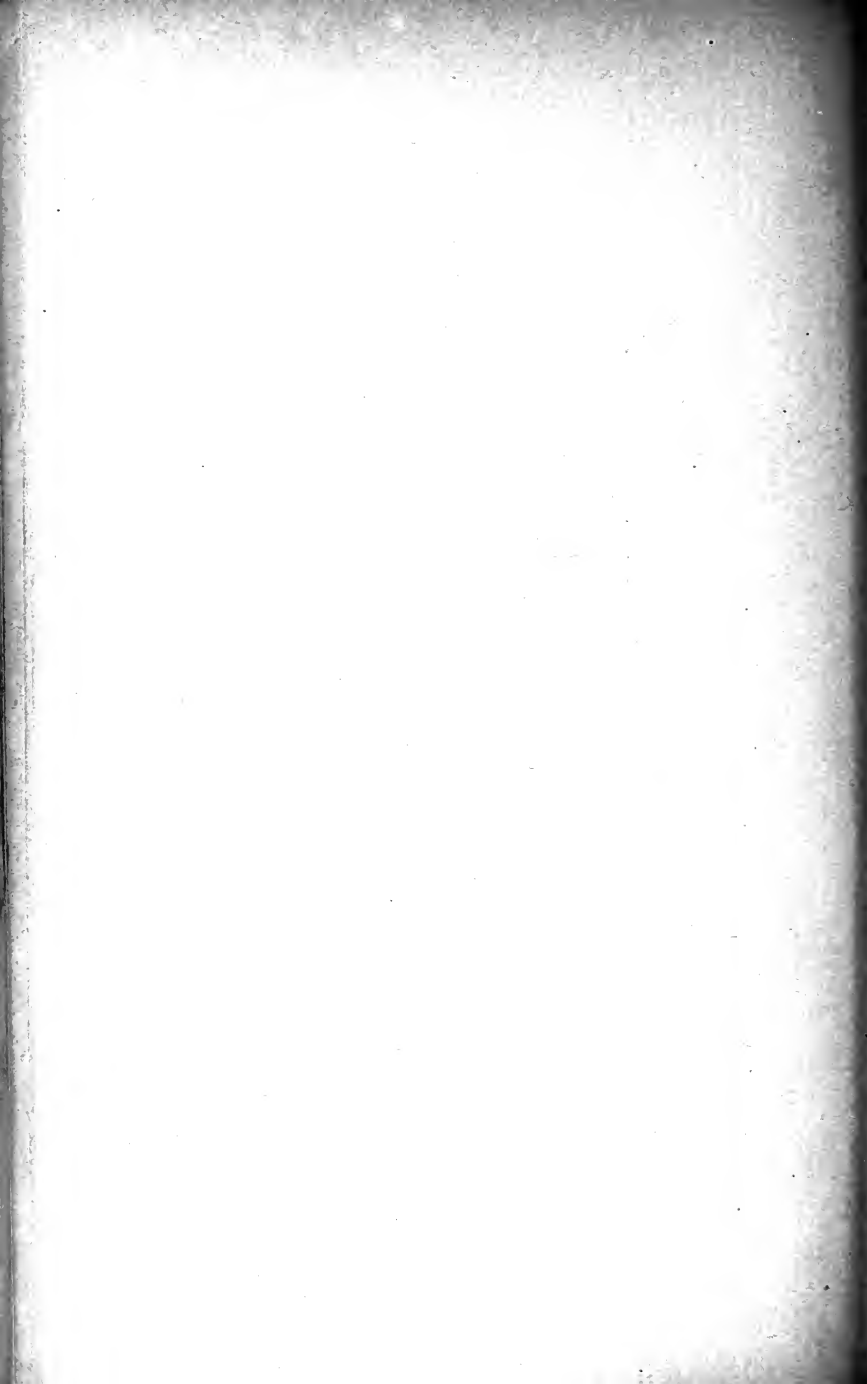
Thee from the fervor of hearts welded as brother  
to brother ;

Us from thy beauty and truth ; thee and thy sons  
from each other.

All hail to thee, Beautiful One ! deep revered,  
    love of a nation !  
To thee be the hand horizontal uplifted, in grave  
    salutation ;  
In thee are the potencies wrapped, new lights  
    springing forth of thy being  
As the stars from the womb of the night. Press  
    on, in the vision all-seeing,  
Through darkness and dread and despair, to the  
    dawn and the light and the glory,  
Thy 'scutcheon the worth of mankind, thy annals  
    humanity's story.



SONNETS.



### UNCROWNED.

LOVE looked upon me with immortal eyes,  
And I became a god with heart of flame ;  
Faith, with a woman's lips, pronounced my name  
Full tenderly, entreating, loverwise.  
Each spake unto me in the other's guise ;  
Love said : *Believe. Unfaith is true love's shame.*  
And like a benison Faith's whisper came :  
*Love is the deepest of my mysteries.*

Then I who lacked fine fibre to perceive  
Life's high beatitudes, trailed in the dust  
The chaplet Heaven had placed upon my head ;  
Alas ! in loving I could not believe ;  
I dallied with the courtesan Distrust ;  
I questioned ! Faith and Love together fled.

## KARMA.

BIRTH and desire and death and birth again.  
The purgatory of a deathless soul,  
Elusive bubbles which forever roll  
Down restless rivers to the moaning main ;  
The seasons open and the seasons wane,  
Eternal bells for dead millenniums toll,  
Karma endures, and lays its weight of dole  
Upon the tablets of the aching brain.

The deeds of men are eddies in the wave,  
Forever forming fainter, wider rings ;  
Alas ! there is no potency to save,  
Nor for the pain of life a healing balm.  
Oh, for the Buddha's holy chastenings !  
The blest Nirvâna ! The unending calm !

## EARTH AND NIGHT.

(PARAPHRASE OF WALT WHITMAN.)

I WALK beneath the tender, growing night,  
Where darkness makes a mystery of the sea,  
Chanting beatitudes, as one made free  
And soaring skyward in ecstatic flight.  
Upon my lips the south wind breathes delight,  
And thro' the slumbering trees pours melody ;  
Press close, bare-bosomed joy, for I am he  
With eyes anointed to diviner sight.

Still, nodding Night ! that for my solace keepest  
A beauty which no touch of tempest mars ;  
Sad Earth ! that for departed sunset weepst,  
I read a stern evangel in thy scars.  
I am the lover in whose heart thou sleepest,  
O Night ! that hast the largess of the stars.

SIC ITUR AD ASTRA.

WHO builds on Reason builds upon the sand  
A fabric mortal as the human brain,  
A fetich-temple crumbling 'neath the strain  
Of Love's first touch, and razed at her demand.  
Mind is a function, by Omniscience planned,  
Dull as digestion, earthly-bred as pain ;  
Thought's final triumph is to prove thought vain,  
And logic's life is quenched by logic's hand.

The Spirit's intuition, strong and pure,  
Alone soars fetterless to realms above,  
Leaping in scorn past reason's bounds, secure  
Where sentient knowledge dies, true life to prove ;  
Emotion, feeling, these alone endure ;  
Thank God ! God is not Intellect, but Love.

AN EARLY-APRIL MORNING.

**A**CROSS the sky the rifted clouds pursue  
Rare shapes enwrought to wonders manifold,  
And robins glance obliquely to behold  
The cawing caravans that speck the blue ;  
Thy jewels are half a frost and half a dew,  
And o'er the earthy stretches of the wold  
A warm caress, from fingers still a-cold,  
Falls like an old song in a cadence new.

Dear Morning ! with thy maid's hair unconfined  
By virgin fillets of a later spring,  
Risen as from a rounded dream to find  
The world a-riot for a bourgeoning,  
Thy eyes spill sleep and sunlight, while the wind  
Beats blood to blushes with his gusty wing.

FINIS CORONAT OPUS.

**A**MBITION'S finger beckoned and I ran  
With bleeding feet o'er rugged paths and  
drear,  
Spurning the inward whispers, soft and clear,  
Which said : " In vain ! Thy life is but a span ;  
The grave shall cover all." Still, in the van  
Of human action, I thought soon to rear  
Some mighty monument to vanquished fear,  
—A shaft to mark the triumph of a *Man*.

Poor fool ! My gold was lost amid the dross ;  
Hope died within me, and, as one who mourns,  
I bowed before a bitter sense of loss,  
Clinging despairing to the altar's horns,  
And raised my eyes to where, upon the cross,  
In sad reproof, hung a crown of thorns.

ELECTRA.

MY Love too stately is to be but fair,  
Too fair she is for naught but stateliness;  
She bids me Nay, and yet a silent Yes  
Dwells in the dusk her shadowy eyelids wear.  
My Love's step makes a music in the air,  
Touching the sense with a divine caress,  
And all the rapture of the dawn doth bless  
The light that leaps to life across her hair.

Her mouth is just the love-couch for a song,  
And 'mid the fragrance of its riven flowers  
Low laughter breaks and trembles close to tears  
Mingled of mirth and melody, as a throng  
Of bird notes wakes to joy the drowsy hours  
And weaves delight through all the grieving  
years.

## BEDTIME.

AS children, who, through all the sunburnt day,  
Have tossed aside their playthings, one by  
one,

Ceasing each frolic ere 't were well begun  
To taste the joyance of some newer play,  
When bedtime comes, turn from their games away,  
With little feet too heavy now to run  
And eyes too full of sleep to miss the sun  
Whose beams still on the mother's forehead stay ;

So we, tired children of the garnered years,  
Grown weary of our toys of gold and place,  
Nor craving uncompanioned days to reap  
The harvest of our half remembered tears,  
Look in the universal mother's face,  
And murmuring : " It is bedtime," fall asleep.

## DECORATION DAY.

LET fall the roses gently. It may be  
That in the sunlight of a fairer clime  
They shall rebloom to beauty as sublime  
As this departed flower of chivalry ;  
And ever as the sobbing of the sea,  
Breeze-rippled, breaks to chants of lordlier  
rhyme,  
Silence your dirges, and in martial time  
Let loud-lipped trumpets blazon victory !

Yield not to grief the solace of a tear,  
But 'neath the forefront of a spacious sky  
Smile all exultant, as they smiled at fear  
Who dared to do when doing meant to die.  
So best may comrades prove remembrance dear,  
So best be hallowed earth where soldiers lie.

A SONNET OF SILENCE.

TIPTOE, with finger at her lip, and rare  
Red-rose mouth rounded to a song unsung,  
A mute maid half a-dream her flowers among,—  
Nature, whose love the loves of all men bear,  
Whose eyes the eyes of all men have found fair,  
Feels in the changes on her spirit rung  
The melody of an unspoken tongue,  
The eloquence of silence everywhere.

Hushed is the poesy of Summer flowers,  
Silent the vast evangel of the stars,  
And Time, whose noiseless fingers tell the hours  
Like beads upon a vestal's rosary,  
Hears voiceless music writ in golden bars,—  
The mirth of moonlight silent on the sea.

VICTOR HUGO.

(MAY 22, 1885.)

E VANGELIST of truth, whose sovereign glance  
Encompassed centuries, and from the fen  
Of passion wrested beauty ; thou whose pen  
Ennobled love and glorified romance ;  
Great champion of liberty, whose lance—  
A beacon to the wavering hearts of men—  
Impaled the false, and ever and again  
Bare death to tyranny and fame to France.

To thee immortal laurel wreaths belong,  
To us a memory that the world reveres ;  
'T was thine to know the good, to right the wrong  
'T is ours to glean the fruitage of thy years ;  
Thou gav'st to us a gift divine—thy song,  
We give to thee our human tribute—tears.

WALT WHITMAN.

(MAY 31, 1886.)

BOLD innovator in the realm of thought ;  
Strong-sinewed Titan, fighting for the right,  
And wresting from the panoplies of night  
The glories that the patient stars have caught  
From an evanished sun ; brave teacher taught  
By Nature's lips to see with Nature's sight,  
And so to shed day's fair, unsullied light  
Upon the work your rugged hands have wrought.

You stand serene upon your mountain crag,  
Unmindful of the shallow hum which fills  
The valleys with derision. You can wait,  
And waiting, find your own, when prescient Fate  
Shall grant slow justice, and unfurl the flag  
Of Innocency on a thousand hills.

WALT WHITMAN.

(MARCH 26, 1892.)

DARKNESS and death? Nay, Pioneer, for thee  
The day of deeper vision has begun;  
There is no darkness for the central sun  
Nor any death for immortality.  
At last the song of all fair songs that be,  
At last the guerdon of a race well run,  
The upswelling joy to know the victory won,  
The river's rapture when it finds the sea.

Ah, thou art wrought in an heroic mould,  
The modern man upon whose brow yet stays  
A gleam of glory from the age of gold,—  
A diadem which all the gods have kissed.  
Hail and farewell! flower of the antique days,—  
Democracy's divine protagonist.

TO JOHN KEATS.

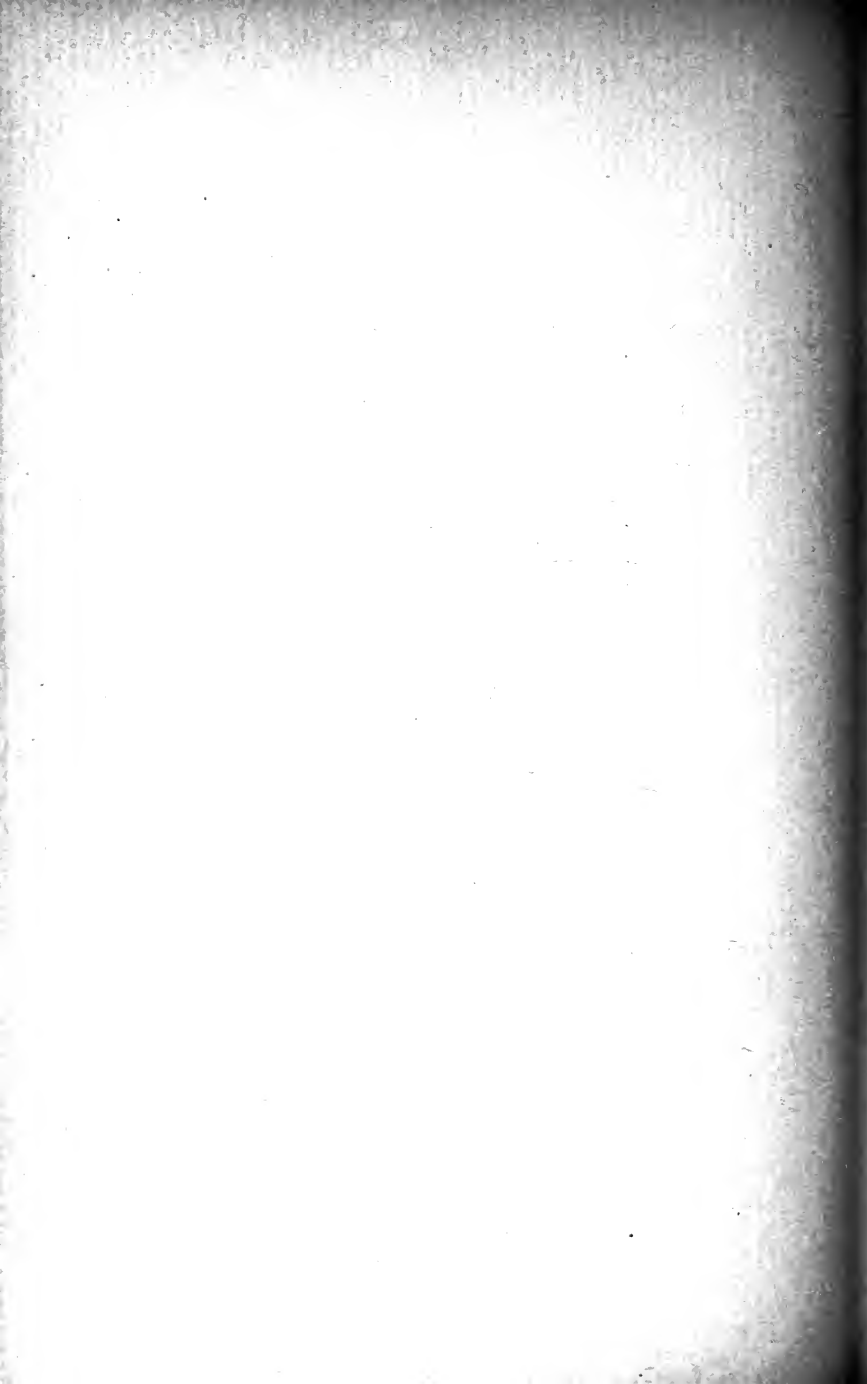
DEEP in the whisp'ring pine whose profile bars  
The moon's white face ; hush'd in the per-  
fumed bowers,  
Where, languid with the breath of sleeping flowers,  
The summer night lies panoplied in stars ;  
High on the mountain crags of brakes and scars,  
A spirit sought to find in poesy's powers  
Some beauty to bedeck time's conquering hours,  
Like roses on the flaming front of Mars.

Yet still, tho' lovingly, he sought in vain,  
Till nature's blossom bore the bloom of art, —  
Till ecstasy of joy had wedded pain  
In bonds which never hand of man shall part ;  
Then found within the chambers of thy brain  
The sacred fire to light Endymion's heart.

TO HERBERT SPENCER.

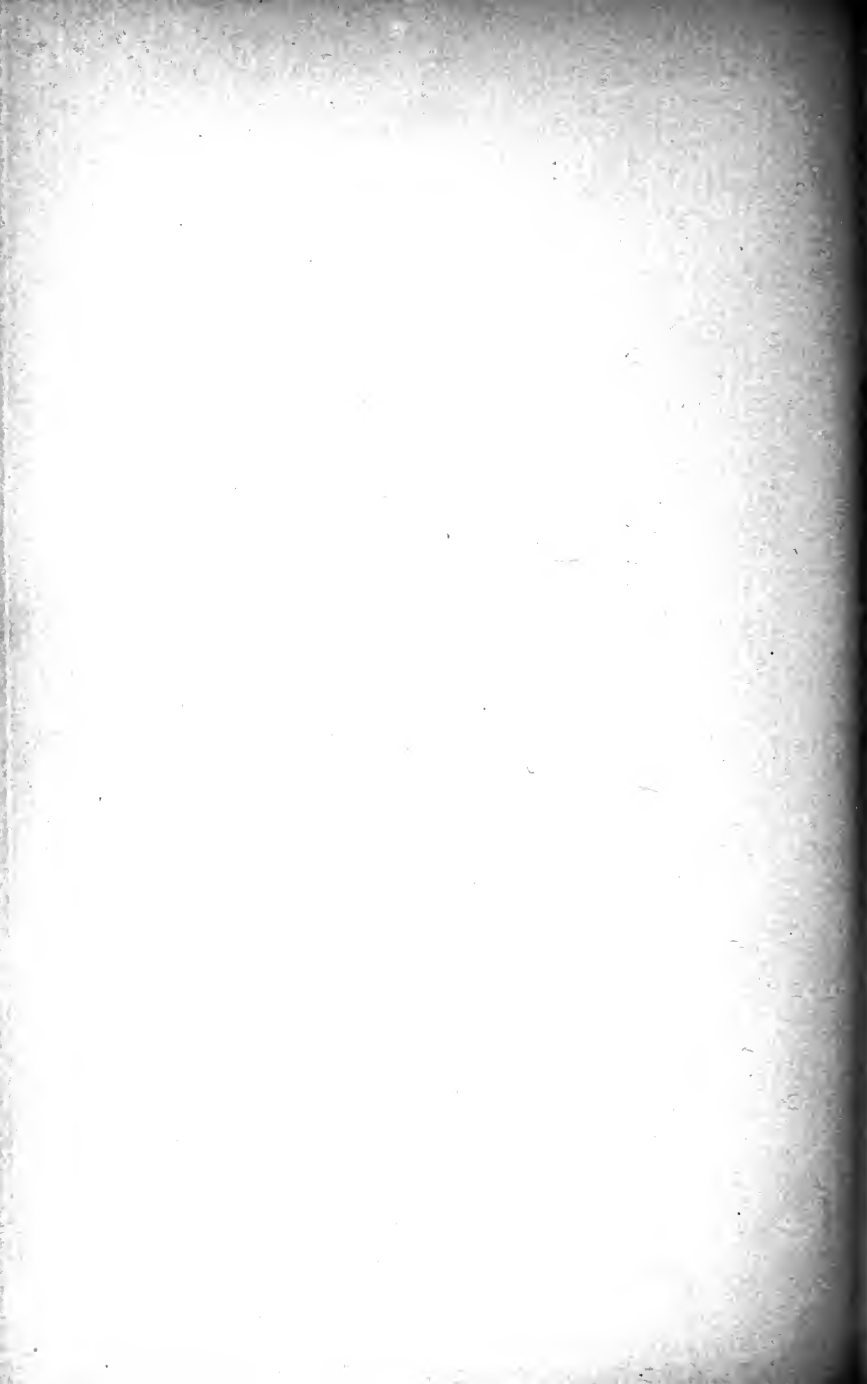
THINKER of ages ! probing pregnant deeps  
Of potent science, till your trained eye saw,  
Amid the maze, a unity of law,—  
An ordered motion whose pulse ever keeps  
Its time-beat while the silent cosmos sleeps,  
Calm in its poise ! The glory yours to draw  
From myths of special causes the hid flaw  
That marks them false. Humanity so reaps

The fruitful harvest that your hands have sown,  
And finds in Force, evolved, dispelled, the trace  
Of that design which, knowing, yet unknown,  
Thrills through a universe from crown to base.  
The fact is ours,—the honor yours alone  
To fling this beacon into trackless space !



AN IDLE DAY:

A SEQUENCE OF SONNETS.



ONE O'CLOCK.

SALVE.

SLEEP, soft begetter of our fantasies !  
Inconsequent philosopher of dreams !  
I give thee greeting as a friend who seems  
To link my spirit to the slumbering trees ;  
Yet farewell for a season ; hours like these  
Bear golden freightage on their hurrying streams,  
—Brave argosies of thought enriched by gleams  
Divinely dowered of deepest mysteries.

I am in love with Earth, and find it fair  
To lie within the rondure of her arms  
Beneath a plenitude of stars, caressing  
The moony midnight of her tresséd hair,  
And draining from her fruitful lips the blessing  
And guerdon of her immemorial charms.

TWO O'CLOCK.

HEART OF THE NIGHT.

SILENCE, that art the harbinger of thought,  
And Fancy, foster-child of Solitude ;  
Companions of the meadow and the wood,  
Whose cheer my early morning steps have sought ;  
How fair the fabric by your cunning wrought  
Upòn my mild and meditative mood,  
The while the unneighbored stars do bend and  
brood  
Above the vasty darkness vision-fraught !

Ah ! beating heart of the soft sandaled night !  
Slow pulse of sad hours orphaned of the sun !  
Your rhythm is timed to measures of that song  
Which strong seraphic voices roll along,  
From mountain height to towering mountain height,  
Like the proud pæan for a victory won.

THREE O'CLOCK.

PROMISE OF DAWN.

A POTENCY and promise. Far away  
Gaunt figures grow to being in the mist ;  
A woven wonder of pale amethyst,  
Shot through with filaments of paler gray,  
Spreads like a vestment for the unborn day,  
Trailing imperial skirts where clouds have kissed  
The silence-haunted hills which lean and list  
The utterance of the everlasting Yea.

*Let there be Light !* I seem to hear the cry  
Down all the ample corridors of Night,  
And dark infinitudes of lonesome sky  
Grow voluble with that majestic calling,  
Reverberant echoes ever faintlier falling  
Through leagues of viewless air : *Let there be Light !*

FOUR O'CLOCK.

DAYBREAK IN THE WOODS.

NIGHT falls away and fades along the breeze,  
Lost in the turning of diurnal tides,  
The morning, like a pallid virgin, glides  
In cool seclusion 'mid the spectral trees ;  
And I, more early risen than the bees  
Whose tardy wooing the laburnum chides,  
Am ravished by an undersong that bides  
The lapsing of the leafy harmonies.

I lift my lips to meet the kiss of Morn,  
Breathing the breath of Day's sweet maiden-  
time,  
And feel within my spirit, loverwise,  
The deep, divine elation sometimes born  
Of strains of music or a far-off chime  
Or love-light lambent in a woman's eyes.

FIVE O'CLOCK.

A WOODLAND POET.

A LIQUID music wrought of many a trill,  
Light as low laughter o'er a summer lea,  
Pours down the greenwood aisles an ecstasy,—  
Utters its rapture, falters and is still.  
Wood Robin ! Sylvan Poet that dost spill  
Such dear delights through listening leaves !  
Thou free  
Spendthrift of joy and hoarded melody !  
What strange love philter hath beguiled thy will ?  
  
For I do think there live within thy breast  
The faith and fervor of an antique age,  
Tuning thy note, at Beauty's soft behest,  
Our sordid aspiration to assuage,  
And to our dull ears making manifest  
The pulse and passion of our heritage.

SIX O'CLOCK.

THE FARM-YARD.

UNHARROWED by the toiling town's alarm,  
In blest seclusion from the daily fret  
Which avarice and blinded greed beget,  
Bask the broad acres of the peaceful farm ;  
And in its special angle, walled from harm,  
The barn-yard, deep with husks of corn which  
yet  
Smell of the fields and tell of honest sweat,  
Lies in the morning sunshine, wide and warm.

Here huddled fatlings slumber in the pens,  
While the cocks' shrill defiance outsoar  
The soft staccato of maternal hens ;  
And from the populous tangles of a vine  
Pert sparrows perch upon the stable door ;  
And bright pails foam beneath large-uddered  
kine.

SEVEN O'CLOCK.

BLENDED VOICES.

NATURE is full of voices ; some that plead  
And some that sorrow and yet more that  
sing ;

Forever keeping for my questioning  
A satisfying answer. This frail reed  
Along the marshes whispers of its need ;  
And in the whirring of a sudden wing  
I catch the lilt of love, wherein the sting  
Yet lingers of love's half-forgotten creed.

I hear a ditty made of woven sighs—  
A heart-break in a cadence ; and again  
The little lisping of a crippled child  
Full of the tender eloquence of pain ;  
And evermore a monotone of mild  
And mellow music born in Paradise.

EIGHT O'CLOCK.

CLOVER.

JUST where the maples whisper morning vows  
To the quick runnel with its mimic tides,  
I know a field of clover which divides  
The meadow grasses from the orchard boughs ;  
And there, knee deep, stand contemplative cows,  
With eyes benignant and swift shuddering hides  
And beaded noses and a breath where 'bides  
The garnered sweetness of the scented mows.

They stand, unmindful of a world of strife  
Wherein men's souls are battered to a lie,  
And hoarded dollars are the goal of life,  
And every mart is tolling Beauty's knell,—  
Where he 's a hero who can cheapest buy,  
And he a god who can the dearest sell.

NINE O'CLOCK.

WHISPERS OF THE CORN.

WHAT sunlit spaces ! Is the world asleep,  
Lulled by the murmurous voices of the morn,  
The while amid the serried ranks of corn  
The keen-edged leaves their idle gossip keep ?  
Perhaps it is but fancy that some deep  
And mythic message to my sense is borne,—  
Half a light song, and half a sigh forlorn,  
Like laughter on the lips of them that weep.

Indeed I know not ; yet within my ears  
Linger such honeyed accents as betoem  
Strange sweetness to the melody of tears,  
And to rejoicing new delights which seem  
The tender lays of long-forgotten years,  
Reëchoed softly through a tranquil dream.

TEN O'CLOCK.

MID-MORN.

BEAUTY is never wholly lost to sight,  
For though she shrink affrighted at the din,  
Haply her presence still does enter in  
The open doorway of our hearts to light  
Our lives to righteousness. Nor may the might  
Of Mammon or the manacles of sin  
Prevent her perfectness, nor ever win  
The scent from roses or the stars from night.

So, lying prone along the summer grass,  
I am content with all things ; and the air  
Comes laden with a song, and clouds that pass  
Above me to my soul a promise bear ;  
And every meadow-lark a message has,  
And every meadow flower is a prayer.

ELEVEN O'CLOCK.

A WAYSIDE SPRING.

THRICE-BLEST Tranquillity that dwellest  
here !

How like a guardian soul with silent wing  
Thou hoverest above this wayside spring  
Outgushing in mellifluence cool and clear !  
Faring along the dusty road, I near  
The dripping stones whereto wet mosses cling,  
And sit me down in sheer content, and sing,  
And hearken to the far-off chanticleer.

What art could so have satisfied my whim  
As this half cocoanut ? I take it up  
And dally with anticipation, then  
Dip deep and drink to all wayfaring men  
In liquid ecstasy which wooes the brim  
Of this inimitable drinking cup.

NOON.

HALF WAY TO ARCADY.

THE faultless fervor of a day in June ;  
An insect-whisper vibrant in the air ;  
The breath of daisies shedding everywhere  
Soft wafture o'er the lids of nodding noon.  
Deep in the listening woods an ancient croon  
Of hermit crickets weaving a fanfare  
Through slender undertones, elusive, rare  
As songs in sleep sung to an antique tune.

The far-off Sabbath-voice of chiming bells  
A peace evangel murmurs to the heart ;  
A scent, half clover's and half asphodel's,  
Falters through dusks wherein strange music  
dwells ;  
Is it the echo of Pan's pipe which tells  
Its story to the ravished ears of Art ?

ONE O'CLOCK.

A WILD ROSE.

WHERE the warm upland melts against the blue,  
An ancient fence, o'er which the lichen  
grows,

Meets a more ancient wall ; and rare repose  
Dwells in the myriad little sounds which sue  
The aged silences in accents new ;

And in that sun-soaked angle blooms a rose,  
Whose heart, blood-tinctured by the joy it knows,  
Just forms the chalice for a drop of dew.

There will I lie and dream and idly wreath  
The tender grasses till my heart discover  
Somewhat of their content ; and there, beneath  
The vines o'er which pale butterflies do hover,  
I 'll listen while the passionate rose doth breathe  
Her soft love-secrets to her powdered lover.

TWO O'CLOCK.

ROADWAY DUST.

A LONG the honest turnpike honest dust  
Keeps its true color, mindless of the fields,—  
Scorning the brighter tints which summer yields,  
Nor aping flowers that bloom because they must ;  
It is a type of individual trust  
In one's own selfhood,—a true force that wields  
The power which moves the world, and ever  
shields  
Man from servility that breeds disgust.

I 'll bow to genius, every reverence show,  
And sit all meekly at the feet of art,  
Albeit I will not imitate a king,  
Nor strive to be another's counterpart,  
For though 't is great to be an Angelo,  
To be one's self is yet a greater thing !

THREE O'CLOCK.

WHEAT-BILLOWS.

THE ground slopes upward towards a little hill  
Drenched in the sunlight, and within the  
space

A field of wheat, o'er which the breezes trace  
Tremors of light and shade that throb and thrill  
In billowy undulations, quickening till

The field lies like a love-enamored face  
Upturned to let the warm caresses chase  
Each other, that the wind may have his will.

So have I seen a woman luring love  
With quivering silk lips and breath of fire,  
The while across her cheek in colors clear  
The swift blood chased the pallors of desire,  
And strange mistrust her tender bosom clove,  
And half her heart was flame and half was fear.

FOUR O'CLOCK.

REMEMBRANCE.

A QUICK commotion in the startled leaves,  
A shudder of the living green ; I know  
It was a bird that winged its flight, although  
I saw no creature. So my soul receives  
Time's fleeting passage as my life it cleaves  
With human happiness or human woe ;  
Such are the memories that come and go,  
The while the sun his dappled patchwork weaves.

And I, who lean and dream, am half in love  
With things unreal and passion's whitened em-  
bers,  
Embracing shadowy shapes, nor asking why  
A vanished beauty holds a joy above  
All others, as the saddened night remembers  
Dead meteors that have once illumed a sky.

FIVE O'CLOCK.

ASPIRATION.

DROWSING beneath the hum of summer bees,  
Marking with half-closed eyes the liberal sky,  
Lulled to soft slumbers by the lullaby  
Of winds grown voluble among the trees,  
My seeking soul, as one who fain would seize  
The passing passion of a song on high,  
Leaps upward with the immemorial cry  
Which God has echoed down the centuries.

The kindred spirits of the sunburnt day  
Make earth a heaven and existence bliss,—  
Plume with Mercurial wings my feet of clay  
And touch my brows with a celestial kiss,  
Till lips that faltered lisp a loftier lay,  
And from a fairer world bring peace to this

SIX O'CLOCK.

CLOUD-MAGIC.

**I**MAGINATION is the highest truth ;  
And I, upgazing through the spaces clear  
To mark the clouds' caprices, am a seer,  
From Fancy's fabric fashioning uncouth  
Yet faithful images,—such forms, in sooth,  
As tempt to favor while they touch with fear ;  
Misshapen giants with a changeful leer ;  
Nude naiads glorious in perennial youth.

Then passionate faces yearning towards the West,  
The nostrils palpitant with strange desire,  
A shudder quickening the nether lip,  
Wherefrom the blood dies of its own unrest ;  
Again a sudden change ; a helmless ship ;  
The chaos of the red sun's funeral pyre.

SEVEN O'CLOCK.

THE BROOK.

LIGHT-HEARTED babbler of a thousand tales,  
Half sung, half spoken, and in broken trills  
Borne lightly to my ear, thy music fills  
My heart with joy when summer daylight pales,  
And through the murmurous glooms of shadowy  
dales  
Thou bearest whispers from the distant hills ;  
And as the iterant voices of thy rills  
Sing among pebbles, visions of white sails  
  
That top quaint fishing craft upon the river  
Wherein thou find'st at last thy resting-place,  
Rise up before me and in silence quiver  
Like sudden smiles across a questioning face ;  
Till wider fancy seems to picture thee  
Enfolded, yet still singing, in the sea.

EIGHT O'CLOCK.

THE TWILIGHTS.

A LIGHT wind loiters down the wooded ways,  
Bearing the breath of orchards and replete  
With such an essence as alone should greet  
A sense grown fine through many vagrant days.  
A sigh among the slender leafage stays,  
And married lights break into shafts and meet  
Where weary Nature, in her green retreat,  
Upon her lips a hushing finger lays.

A dying radiance through the thicket gleams,  
The colors of the day are slowly furled,  
A mystery trembles onward silverly,—  
A lily on the bosom of the world,—  
Elusive as the pageantry of dreams  
Or moonlight sleeping on a summer sea.

NINE O'CLOCK.

PERSPECTIVE.

I PAUSE upon a mystic borderland  
Wherefrom the visible world seems all besprent  
With flowers of changeful hue and colors blent  
In strange confusion. I do think a band  
Of those Greek heroes who once, hand to hand,  
Fought for the prizes which the gods had sent,  
Sometime their glowing presence must have lent  
To these green aisles where wooded sentries stand.

How weirdly, through the glooms of yonder tree,  
Wavers the owl's cry, with its minor strains  
Fateful as dirges sung to murdered joy,—  
Sad as the sobs of pale Andromache  
To see her Hector, foul with gory stains,  
Dragged pitilessly 'neath the walls of Troy !

TEN O'CLOCK.

FANTASY.

AS some luxurious beauty of the East,  
Grown languid in the cassia-scented air,  
With narrowed eyes looks through her sultry hair,  
And toys the sweetmeats at a regal feast,  
The while her bodice, from its cords released,  
Stays still a-warm to know her bosom there,—  
So seems the night, with constellations fair,  
Heavy with scents left when the breezes ceased.

Am I alone? Is not some spirit here?  
Across the waiting air there comes a call;  
High overhead the tasselled branches nod,  
With just a whisper flattering the ear,  
And silence, with its million tongues, fills all  
The woodland spaces with the name of God.

ELEVEN O'CLOCK.

NOCTURNE.

A NIGHT bird, from the hollow of the dark,  
Beats upward through the pulseless air and  
dies

Into the mighty mystery of the skies  
That bend, with large imperial brows, to mark  
Earth's slumbering perfectness, mayhap to hark  
Her little breathings as she lightly lies,—  
To-morrow's sunlight prisoned in her eyes,  
And in her heart songs of to-morrow's lark.

So thoughts which will not wear the yoke of words,  
Fretting the stillness with their whispering wings,  
Take flight more swift and silent than the bird's,  
Into a heaven of vaster fashionings ;  
And unknown beauty all my vision girds,  
And voiceless music through my spirit sings.

MIDNIGHT.

VALE.

O H ! tender benison of darkness, cast  
Upon the throbbing bosom of the earth,—  
Dropt as a mantle over all the mirth  
And madness of the day,—thou ever hast  
A sweet compassion for us, and at last  
A popped peace ! I gaze upon the girth  
Of heaven, heavy with the rare new birth  
Of beauty crescent through the spaces vast,

The while the unruffled forehead of the night  
Lifts royally its diadem of stars ;  
Then, as a sleeper fares adown his way  
'Mid dreamy meadows, lying still and white,  
I thread the moonlit lane, pass through the bars,  
And close the record of an idle day.

A PRIMROSE PATH:

SONGS AND TRIFLES.



## BETWEEN.

BETWEEN the sea sand and the sea  
The yellow foam flakes lightly lie,  
A very dross of waves, till free  
Quick-kissing breezes surge and sigh,  
And all the laurels on the lea  
Bend low to listen as bends the sky  
Where spaces throb with melody.  
Then foam is wrought to gold, and I,  
Silent, find Heaven surrounding me—  
In gilded fringe—in breeze's sigh ;  
Between the sea sand and the sea  
Where yellow foam flakes lightly lie ;  
Where spaces throb with melody  
Between the skylark and the sky.

Between the sunset and the sun  
Night slumbers on the sleeping bars,  
And through its curtain, one by one,  
Gleam tender glances of the stars  
Between the sunset and the sun.  
And so between my love's lips lies  
An untold message meant for me ;  
Whether 't will bring me sweet surprise  
Or dole or doubt or Paradise  
Is known alone to destiny.

Yet, as I wait, a dream of tears  
Between her eyelids and her eyes—  
A mystery of mist—appears,  
That hints of hope and flatters fears,  
And on her lips a shudder of sighs,  
And on her lids a red that dies  
To slumberous shadows that fall and rise,  
Till as I seek some sign to see,  
Between her eyelids and her eyes  
Love lights his lamp and laughs at me.

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## CRADLE SONG.

[FROM THE DRAMA "MARIE DEL CARMEN."]

SLEEP, my pretty one,  
Sleep, my little one,  
Rose in the garden is blooming so red ;  
Over the flowers the fleet-footed hours  
Dance into dreamland to melody wed  
To the voice of the stream—to a song in a dream,  
Sung low by the brook to its stone-covered bed,  
Sung soft as it goes ;  
And the heart of the rose  
Gives a tremulous leap  
As the melody flows.  
Ah, little one, sleep,  
Sleep.

Peace, my little one,  
Peace, my pretty one,  
Lilies bend low to the breath of the breeze ;  
Lithe as a willow, the boat on the billow  
High tosses the spray for the sunlight to tease  
With a kiss and a tear—with a rainbow, a fear,  
For the light is the sun's and the spray is the sea's.  
And the wind o'er the lea  
Breaks to cadences free  
As the waves that release  
The low laugh of the sea.  
My pretty one, peace,  
Peace.

Joy, my pretty one,  
Joy, my little one,  
Fairies of night from their bright-jewelled cars  
Fling a faint sheen and shimmer on ripples where  
glimmer  
The up-gazing eyes of the down-gazing stars ;  
And the boat, while it glides, sings the song of  
the tides  
As they kiss into languor the sand of the bars.  
Oh, river flow fleet,  
Ere the melody meet  
The sea's breath to destroy  
What the echoes repeat :  
My little one, joy,  
Joy !

## CAPRICE.

A SUMMER night with perfumed breath  
Told love-*tales* to the listening trees,  
And hedge-row buds, in guise of death,  
Dreamed of the kisses of the bees,  
While, wheeling, circling, faint and far,  
A firefly showed its shimmering spark,  
And, like an evanescent star,  
Painted its life along the dark ;  
And I, who wandered in the lane,  
Grew envious of a thing so free,  
And sighed and gazed and sighed again,  
And cried : “ Kind Heaven give to me  
The firefly’s liberty.”

My love came tripping down the lane ;  
The boughs bent low to touch her head ;  
The clover never felt the pain  
Of death beneath so light a tread ;  
And ere I knew, the firefly’s wings  
Were tangled in her burnished hair,  
The intermittent glimmerings  
Illumining a face more fair ;  
Then I, who felt my heart beat wild  
The love-light in her eyes to see,  
Became capricious as a child,  
And prayed : “ Sweet Heaven grant to me  
A like captivity.”

A SERENADE.

I.

ON roses asleep in the starlight,  
On daisies that dream of the sky,  
The tremor and touch of a far light  
Falls faint through the spaces on high,—  
Falls fair where the tendrils are clinging,  
Lies light where the lilies are flinging  
Perfumes to the winds that are singing  
A song that is born of a sigh.

II.

Low brows for a thousand caresses,  
Lithe throat for a season's delight,  
Ah ! spice-scented wonder of tresses  
Dim-shadowed and duskily bright,  
Pale passionate arms that embower  
Light love that endures but an hour,  
Lips pressed like a flower on a flower,  
Eyes dark with the spell of the night.

III.

Bitter-sweet though the pang and the pleasure,  
I would rather be bounden than free ;  
Life treadeth a statelier measure  
With the finger of Love on the key ;

Pain kisses the rod of the Giver,  
As the ripples in ecstasy quiver  
Where breaks the sad heart of the river  
In the turbulent heart of the sea.

---

LOVE CAME TO ME.

LOVE came to me when I was young ;  
He brought me songs, he brought me flowers ;  
Love wooed me lightly, trees among,  
And dallied under scented bowers ;  
And loud he carolled : " Love is King ! "  
For he was riotous as spring  
And careless of the hours,—  
When I was young.

Love lingered near when I grew old ;  
He brought me light from stars above ;  
And consolations manifold  
He fluted to me like a dove ;  
And love leaned out of Paradise  
And gently kissed my faded eyes  
And whispered : " God is Love, "—  
When I grew old.

FLOWER O' THE SEA.

A LITTLE maiden debonair  
With sunshine tangled in her hair,  
Along with me, beside the sea,  
Trode yellow sands, and clapped her hands  
To see the foam come rolling home,—  
Come rolling home right royally.

She never dreamed that she was fair,  
This little maiden debonair,  
Nor questioned I the reason why  
I found to stray with her alway  
Was veriest joy,—I but a boy  
With small feet brown and bare.

And once a wave broke high in air,  
Scattering foam flakes everywhere,  
And something bright flashed in the sight  
Of her, my maiden debonair ;  
And when the tide went out, she cried :  
“See, see ; a pearl ! The breakers hurl  
Their gems to land for our delight.”

And so we strayed, my little maid  
And I, beside the sea ;  
And onward sped the silent years,  
And silenter grew we,  
For I was thoughtfuller, and she  
Was not the same to me.

There grew a wonder in her eyes,—  
My maiden dainty, debonair,—  
And voices tuned to subtler art  
Were voluble within her heart  
And to her soul made questioning ;  
She felt the spell, yet could not tell  
Whence sudden shame so strangely came ;  
Whence hopes and fears and tremulous tears  
And sweet surprise and quivering sighs,—  
Half laughter,—laid on lips that sing.  
She could not tell ; she scarce need care,  
My maiden slender, debonair.

But I knew well. The child had fled  
And left a woman in her stead ;  
My maiden shy and debonair  
Had 'wakened in her Paradise,  
And, fairer grown, had grown more wise,  
Alas ! as wise as fair.

And as again beside the sea  
We wandered homeward silently,  
I leaned and lightly touched her hair,  
And said : " Sweet maiden debonair,  
A little girl once found a pearl  
Left by the deep mysterious tide,—  
A thing of beauty from the wide  
Unfathomed sea ; nor faltered she,  
But in her hair the treasure fair  
Set like a dew-drop in a rose.  
And now, my maiden debonair,

Your heart has found a gem more rare,—  
A pearl from out the sea of life,—  
*Love*, that the flowing tides enclose.  
The child knew not ; the woman knows ;  
And knowledge ever bringeth strife ;  
Yet where the pearl lies, is repose,—  
Repose which I would have you share  
With me, dear maiden debonair."

She paused a space, then gently drew  
From out her breast a pearl, and said :  
"Forth from the sea it came to me,  
And from my heart it goes to you."  
And lo ! the starlight of the skies  
Lay sleeping in her lifted eyes,  
And on her brow a glory shed.  
And faint across the meadows fell  
The calling of a vesper bell  
That high above sang *Love ! and Love !*  
And ah ! my maiden debonair,  
How fair you were ! How passing fair !  
As through the sand we trod the strand  
And gazed far out to sea.

---

MARGUERITE.

FAIR Marguerite, the red of parted lips  
Grows deeper, and the glory of thy brow  
More glorious yet, as lowered lids allow  
Swift glances, fleeting, but as sweet as sips

Of honey from the hearts of flowers. So now,  
Poised in the halo of the sun that dips  
Behind the empurpled hills, thy presence seems  
The realized perfection of my dreams.

Sweet, silent Marguerite ! How may I name  
The hundred-tinted shadows of thy hair ?  
Or count the liquid lights of eyes as rare  
As polished pearls beneath white jets of flame,  
Or soft stars scintillant through lambent air  
In the hushed night ? How, seeing thee, proclaim  
The love I fain would bring, a sacrifice  
To offer at the altar of thine eyes ?

Nay, Marguerite, I cannot ; for the soul  
That reigns transcendent in the dwelling-place  
Of thy fair form, irradiates thy face  
With lustre pure as words writ on the scroll  
Of God's own law. I would not dare erase  
One faintest tracery, although the goal  
Which whispered words of love ensured to me  
Should be an answering whisper felt by thee.

---

#### THE WAY O' THE WORLD.

NELL and I set out together  
In the spring—the heyday ;  
Nell and I, thro' fickle weather,  
Fared afield where cows at tether  
Waited for the May-day.

When the birds were all a-feather  
Nell and I, like true loves,  
Danced thro' sun and summer weather,  
Singing all the while together,  
Scorning thoughts of new loves.

But when frost had nip't the heather  
And each hill and valley  
Donned its gown of russet leather,  
Nell and Ned went off together,—  
I made love to Sallie.

---

## PHILOSOPHY-IN-LITTLE.

A DAY of toil amid the moil  
And muddle of the city,  
I passed in vain and sordid pain  
And worry, more 's the pity !  
I had no heart for books or art  
Or labor of the scholars,  
So crept to bed, with aching head,  
And dreamed of dust and dollars.

Upon the lawn, at early dawn,  
A robin fluted sweetly,  
He sang to me so joyfully  
That up I rose all fleetly ;  
Then out I went and all day spent  
Amid the April greening,—  
Came back at night, enamored quite  
Of nature and her meaning.

## CUPID AND JUSTICE.

THE little God of Love one day  
While walking chanced to lose his way,  
And being, as the poets say,  
Incapable of seeing,  
Flung himself prone upon the grass,  
To wait until some friend should pass.  
And, as he lay, a comely lass  
Adown the road came fleeing.

Her face was fair, her temples white,  
And tho' her step was soft and light,  
She too, alas ! had lost her sight,  
And moved a trifle slowly ;  
She too, alas ! had lost her way,  
And, ever going more astray,  
Soon came to where the Love-God lay  
Among the grasses lowly.

Then Love uprose, with just a trace  
Of mischief on his handsome face,  
And said : " My lady, grant me grace  
That I appear so stupid ;  
But may I beg to know your name ?"  
" I am called Justice," said the dame,  
Then blushed, as low his answer came :  
" And, madam, *I* am Cupid."

He lisped sweet nothings in her ear,  
She frowned, yet could not choose but hear;  
And tho' she strove to look severe,

Her heart was in a flurry.  
Too late they learned the Fates designed  
They nevermore their way should find,  
For neither knew the other blind,  
And both were in a hurry.

---

A RONDEAU OF VASSAR.

OH, Vassar girl, who fain would rise  
Superior to Love's charming lies;  
You who prefer the themes that be  
Modelled on Kant's philosophy;  
Potential ballots in your eyes,

And bridge of nose, judicial, wise—  
In fact a very Bridge of Size  
And intellectuality,  
Oh, Vassar girl!

You're fair, yet from you Cupid flies  
With cramps as though he'd dined on pies;  
For, *suaviter in modo*, he  
Finds you too *fortiter in re*,  
And so to lesser culture hies,  
Oh, Vassar girl!

## EVOLUTION OF THE POET.

WHEN dryads lived and sought to bring  
 Ladona to the sparkling spring  
 Where shaggy Pan was wont to sit  
 And pipe his ditties, poets writ  
 With pens plucked from the swelling wing  
 Of Pegasus, nor felt the sting  
 Hid in the average critic's fling:  
*Poeta nascitur non fit,*  
 When dryads lived.

But nowadays the proper thing  
 Is *first* to get within the ring,  
 And, having made a single hit,  
 An ounce of sense,—a grain of wit,—  
 Will do the rest ; no need to sing  
 “When dryads lived.”

---

## BALLADE TO A BOOKMAN.

CROTCHETY delver in books,  
 Hater of all that is new,  
 Seeker of cosiest nooks  
 Known to the favorite few,  
 Why should you ever ask who  
 Fateward defiance hath hurled?  
 Delver in books it is you—  
 You who have conquered the world.

Snuffy old fellow, whose looks  
Hint of a wig and a queue,  
Scorning the cates of the cooks  
For a pewter of ale and a stew,  
Why should you ever be blue,  
Seeing that runnels have purled,  
Since the beginning, for you —  
You who have conquered the world?

Intimate friend of Horne Tooke's,  
Chum of the Wandering Jew,  
Rating reformers as "crooks"  
And lovers as *enfants perdus*,  
Why should you ever pursue  
Ways of the folk who are swirled  
Into the popular view —  
You who have conquered the world?

ENVOI.

Dream, as you ruminate through  
Smoke into canopies curled;  
Dream, for you 've nothing to do —  
You who have conquered the world.

---

A RONDEAU IN REPLY.

**I**N fallow fields I long to lie —  
A bookman lost in Arcady;  
Or, steeped in grasses to the knees,  
To follow fast where fancy flees;

Though musty lore and legend die,  
I 'd give my conquered world to sigh  
An answer to the lullaby  
    Hot-hummed by honey-loaden bees  
    In fallow fields.

A-dream 'neath circumambient sky,  
To list the crow's remoter cry,  
    The while the love-begetting breeze  
    Flutters the leafy hearts of trees  
And turns the heads of foolish rye  
    In fallow fields.

---

## BALLADE.

**M**AIDEN, if within thy breast  
    Lurks the trust that thou shalt seize  
From life's love the purest, best,  
    Quaffing nectar, while the lees  
    Mingle not ; upon thy knees  
Quickly fall for guidance. Never  
    Dally with false dreams that please ;  
Love and wine deceive us ever.

Youth, who, at the soft behest  
    Of the ruddy wine-cup, ease  
And the sense of being blest  
    Seekest, know thy destinies  
    But await fulfilment ; these  
Shall not stay though thou be clever ;

Follows fate where fortune flees ;  
Love and wine deceive us ever.

Lover, who, upon the crest  
Of the waves of Paphian seas,  
Think'st to find ecstatic rest  
Mid love's charms and panoplies,  
Drown thy dreams *in medias res* ;  
Happiness waits on endeavor ;  
Joys unearned are miseries ;  
Love and wine deceive us ever.

ENVOI.

Youths and maids of all degrees,  
Heads must learn though hearts should sever ;  
Butterflies have stings of bees ;  
Love and wine deceive us ever.

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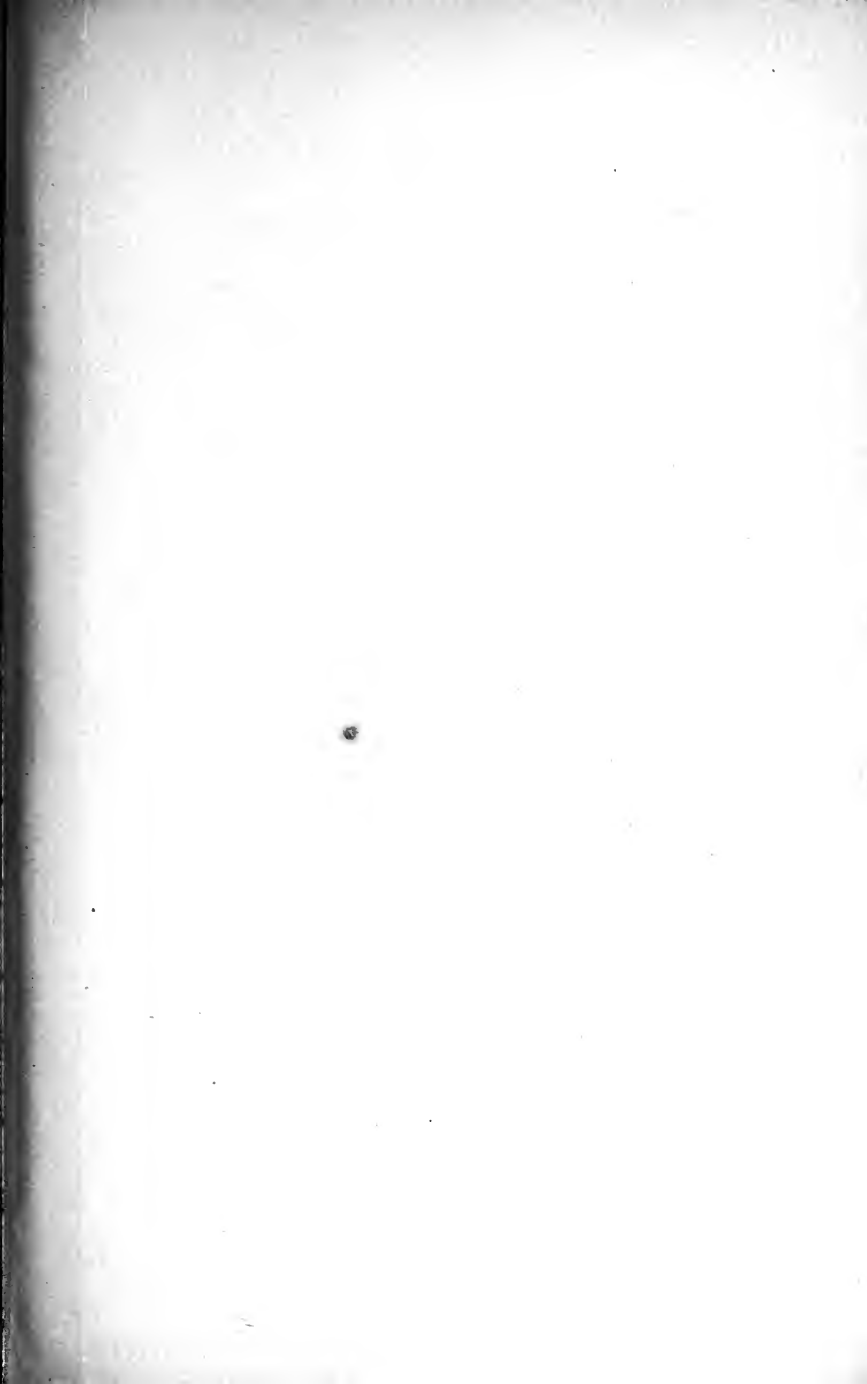
RONDEAU.

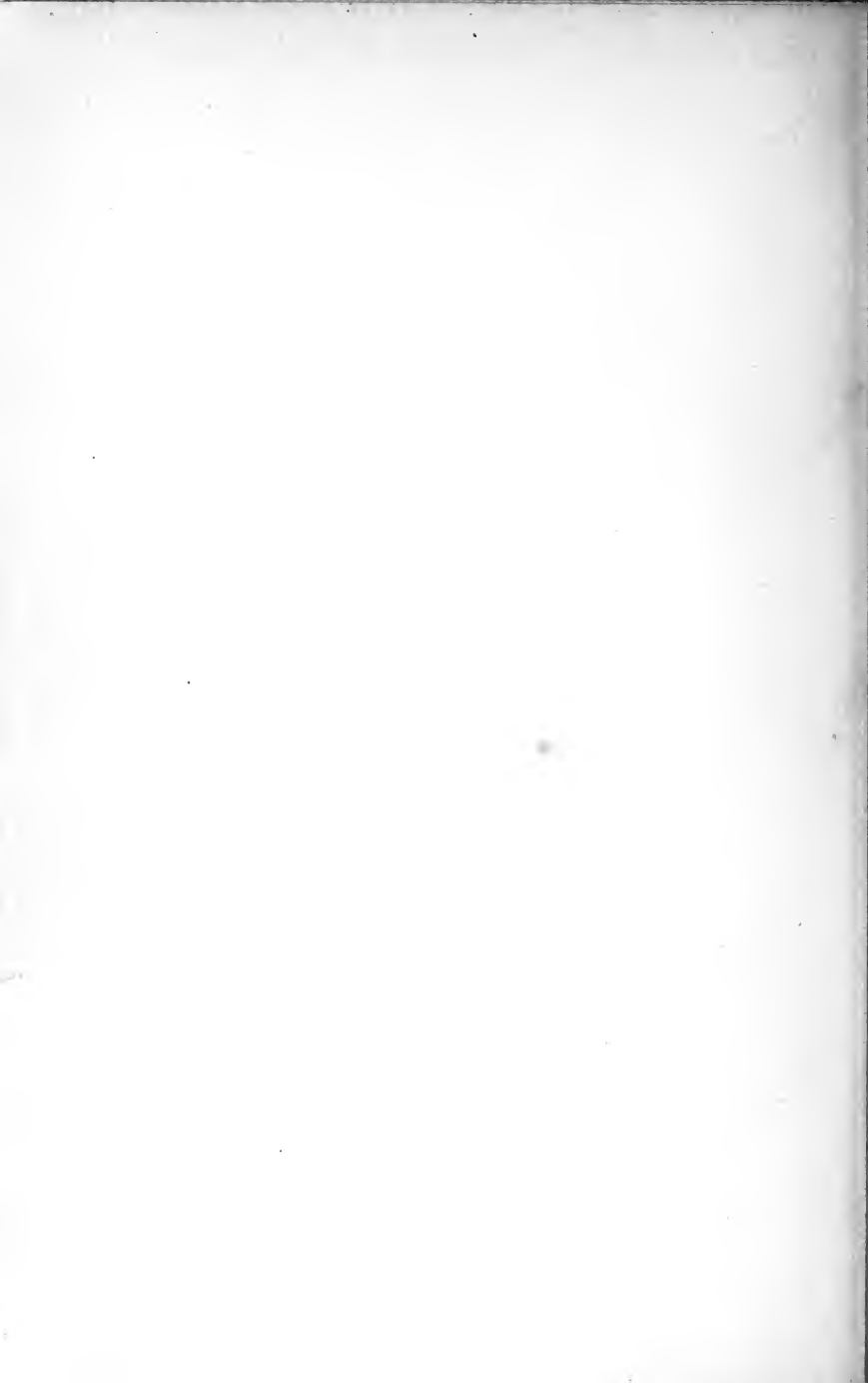
**I**N days of old, when gods divine  
Quaffed potent draughts of golden wine  
From crystal goblets, and in glee  
Sported with dolphins in the sea,  
Or strayed beneath the oak and pine,

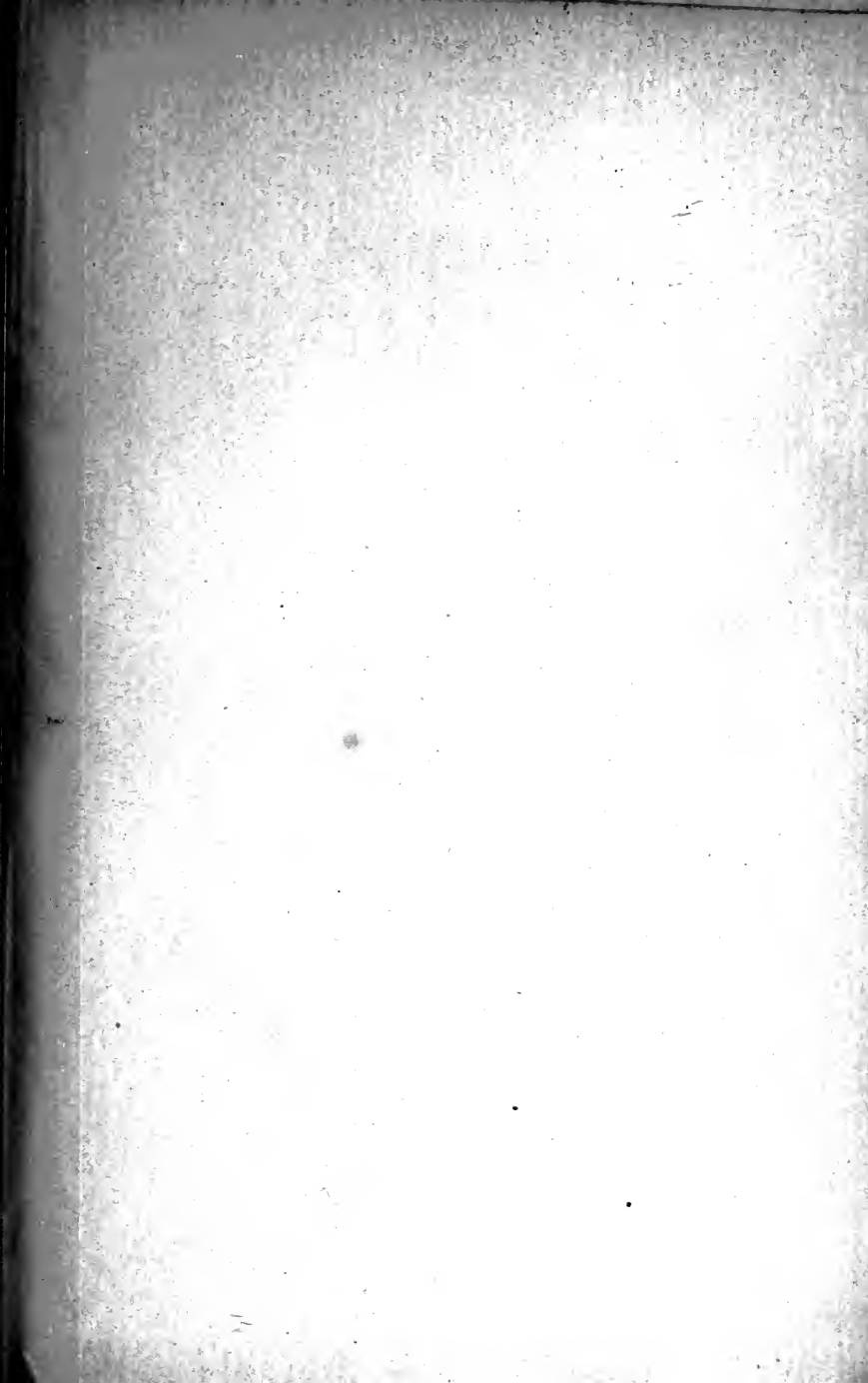
The poet but waited for a sign,  
And through his pen the immortal Nine  
Spake all delicious things that be  
In days of old.

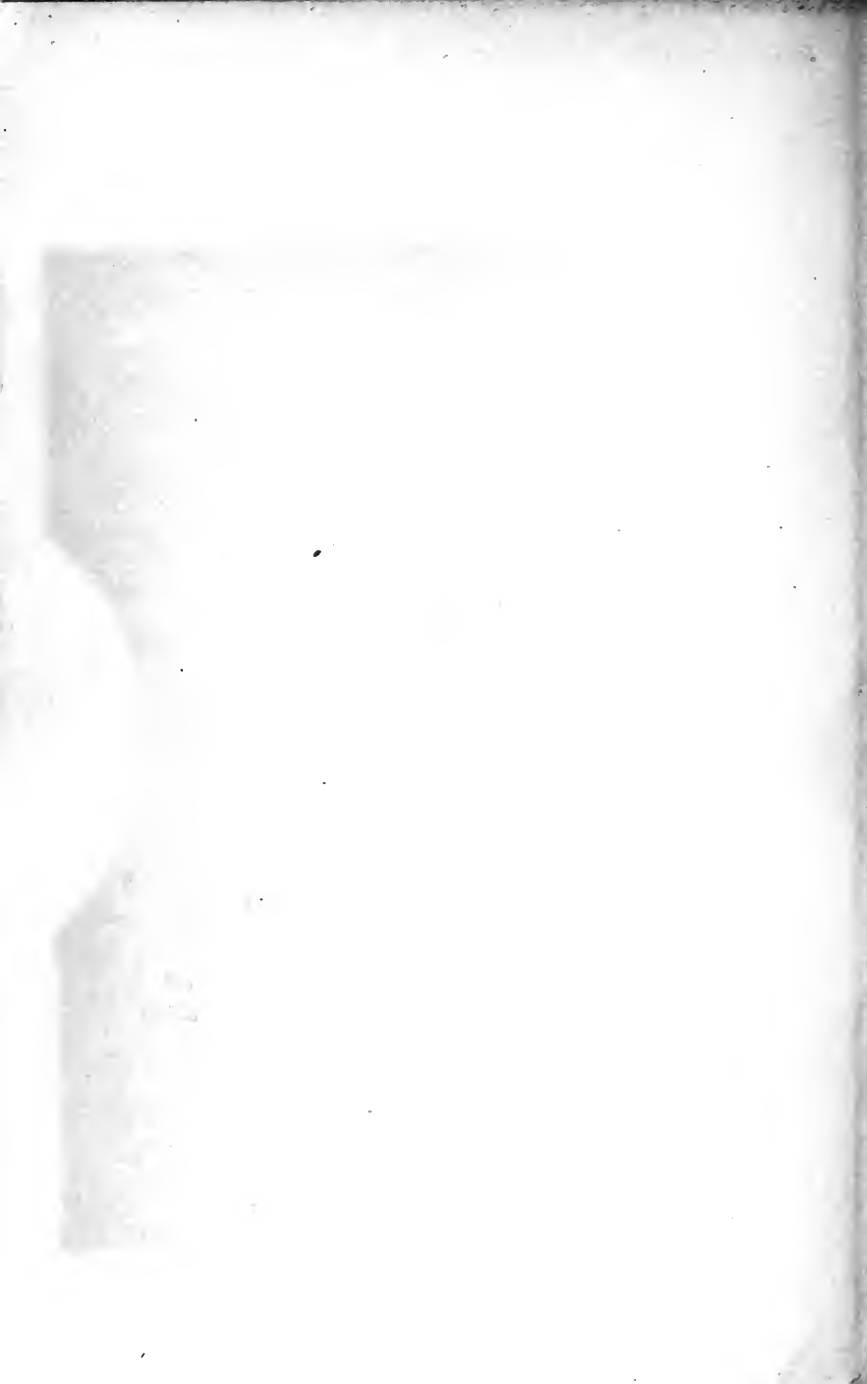
But now the gods have grown so fine  
They keep at home, and not a line  
The muses give to you and me ;  
But, having come to drinking tea,  
Lose brilliance, and so only shine  
In days of old.

THE END.









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